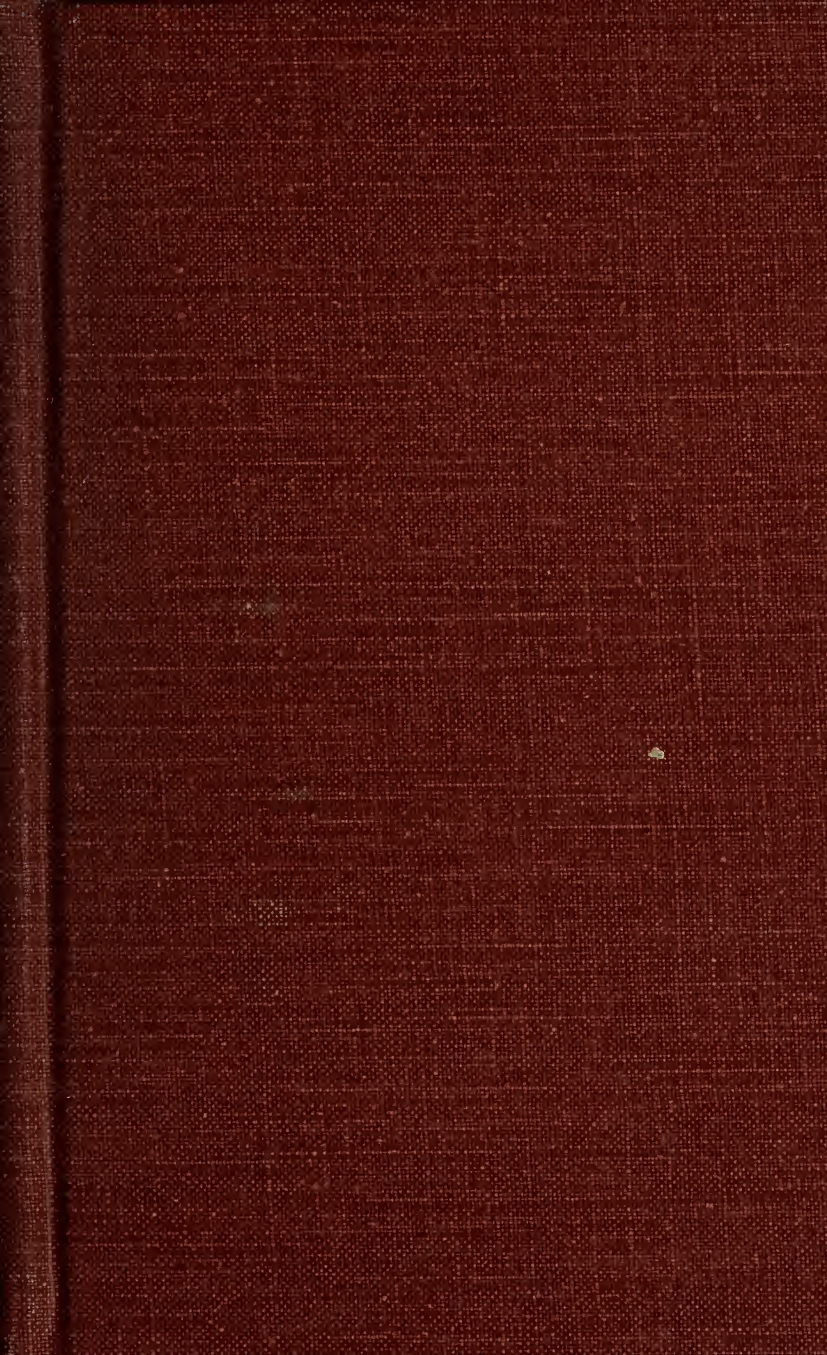
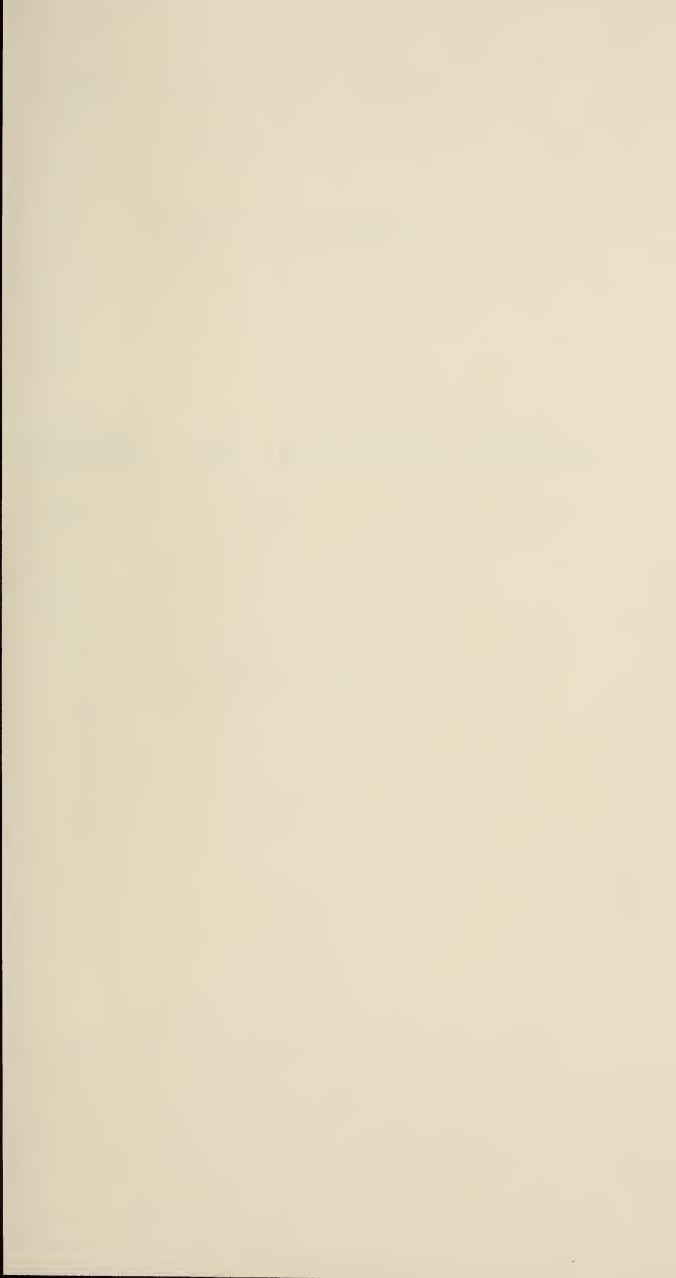














THE APOCALYPTIC DISPENSATION.

TEN LECTURES

ON THE

BOOK OF REVELATION.

BY

examined
WILLIAM B. HAYDEN.

A MINISTER OF THE NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH.

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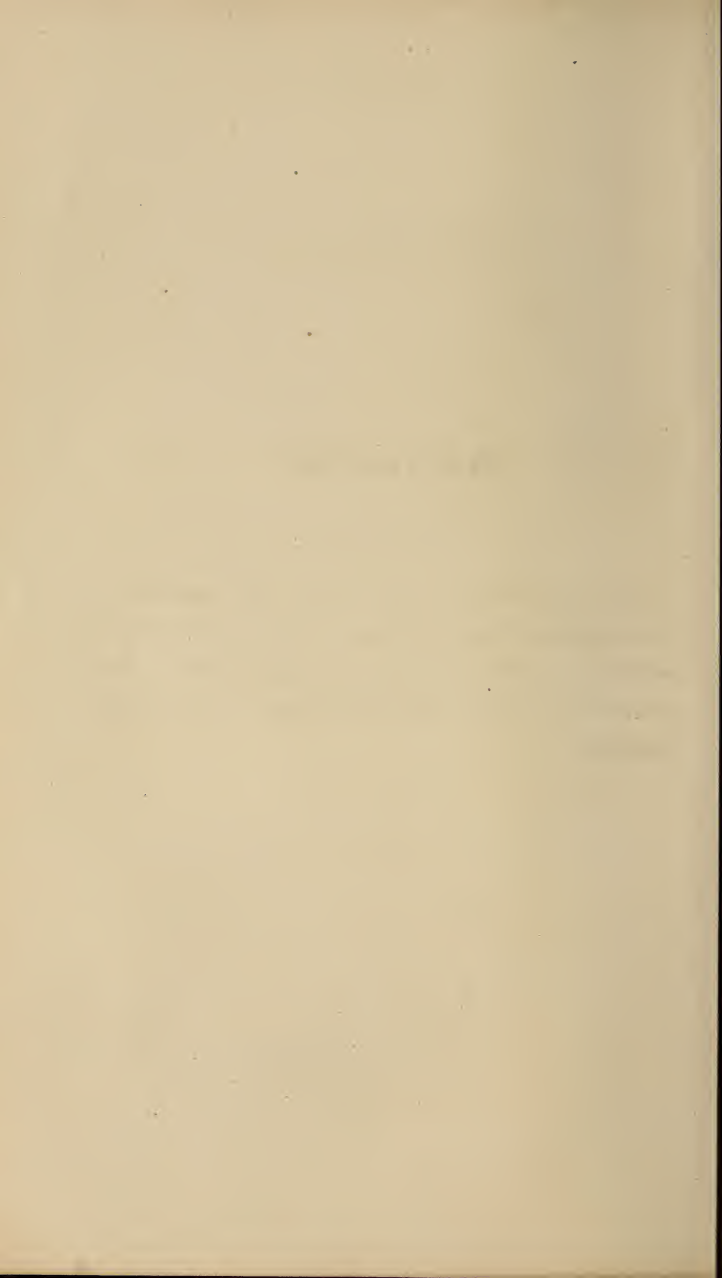
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Dedication.

To the members of the Society and Parish of the New Jerusalem Church in Portland, Maine, endeared to the author by a multitude of kindly attentions during a pastoral connection of fifteen years, this volume is affectionately inscribed.



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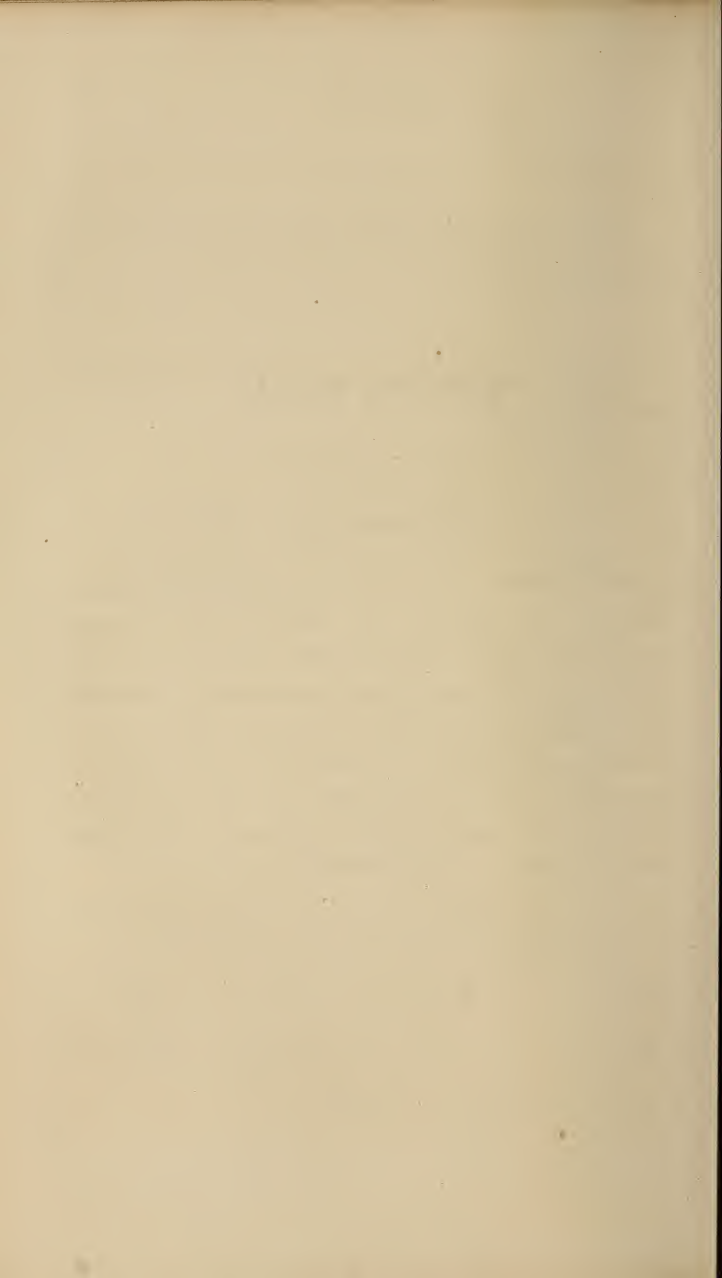
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LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTORY.

CONTENTS:—CHARACTER OF SACRED SCRIPTURES; REASONS FOR BELIEVING THE BIBLE A TRULY DIVINE BOOK—THE WORD OF GOD TO MEN; THE DIVINE LANGUAGE, AND STYLE OF WRITING; NATURE OF INSPIRATION—WHEREIN IT CONSISTS; HOW “THE WORD” WAS GIVEN TO THE PROPHETS; A SPIRITUAL SENSE THROUGHOUT EVERY PART; EXPLANATION OF THE REMARKABLE VISION IN THE FIRST CHAPTER OF EZEKIEL; WHY THE FIRST TABLES OF THE LAW WERE BROKEN.



LECTURE.

“For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.” —
Ezek. i. 20.

OUR theme this evening is the Sacred Scripture. Its bearing on the general subject we have in prospect is obvious. For as we come to a right apprehension of the character of the whole, the better shall we be prepared to understand correctly that particular portion which will be our more especial study.

The importance, too, of the subject will be readily seen and admitted. For the Scripture is the foundation of all our beliefs in spiritual things, the fountain out of which we draw the very life-blood of our religion. The church is built upon the Bible, and the character she attributes to it, and the manner in which she interprets it, will determine her own character, — the amount and quality of her inner life.

It is the great question of the time, this concerning the Holy Writings, their canonicity, their authority, their inspiration. How much there is now written on the subject, and how many different solutions do we hear of the several problems! What is inspiration? and where is it? What opposite theories! And how little meaning is the word sometimes made to carry! But over and above, and behind all the controversies of the day, there is the profound spirit of inquiry still

unsatisfied ; the rational mind seeking for some definite thought in which to rest, while the awakened Christian heart longs for a clearer view of those deeper mysteries of meaning which it feels are wrapped up in the pregnant sentences of this cherished Volume.

We believe the Bible to be a truly Divine Book, an Inspired Writing, — a communication from the Most High, — the Word of God to man. And we use these phrases in their fullest sense, without the purpose of giving them an interpretation which shall in effect vacate or dilute their meaning. We believe that something of this Word was given to man at the beginning, (at first oral, afterwards written,) as his instructor and guide ; that the world has never been without portions of it, somewhere preserved, and that it has been providentially kept and added to, as circumstances required, as a central influence in the development of the world's history.

The contents of the Word are direct communications from the Lord. Jehovah came, and through an angel talked with Moses face to face, as a man talketh with his friend. He communicated to him the very words of the Law, in its entire length, by a living voice, on Mt. Sinai. So He communicated all the days of Moses and all the days of Joshua ; so He communicated with the prophets. The Ten Commandments were written by Himself on the two tables of stone ; “and the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.” Again, we read that “Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah ;” while in the Psalm it is affirmed that “Jehovah gave the word : great was the company of those that published it.”

Thus came the book which we now call; and reverence as, *the Word of God*.

What? (some one may say) the *Infinite* make a book! — the Almighty, Ineffable, Unapproachable Spirit, — the great Being of beings, whom the thought of man cannot reach up to, nor the understanding grasp, — shall He condescend to fashion pieces of stone? Will He stoop to be an imitator of man's art in composing the words of a book?

Why not? The Infinite Mind is every day and moment engaged in processes far more minute and intricate, by the million, on every side of us. Did you ever behold a table of stone that was *not* made and fashioned by him? Then, as to writing a book, or causing one to be written, the wisdom, the thought, and even the very expressions of which shall come from Him, so that we can truly say of it, this is the Divine Book, God is its Author, — what improbable in that? If man can be an author, then why not He who made man? It is Mind speaking to mind. And as the Psalm asks, "He who formed the eye, shall He not see? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear?" — so we ask of all the other human faculties, shall not He who formed them all, exercise them all? and that, too, in infinite degree. That He possesses the power of communicating His thought by written language none can doubt. What more probable, then, than that He will exercise this power for the good of His creatures?

Man is the imitator of his Maker; he is created in the Divine image and likeness, and possesses no single faculty or mental feature but is in some way a faint reflection of a Divine faculty to which it corresponds.

Man is a thinker because his Maker is a thinker. And so he is an author or writer because his Maker is an author and writer. The Divine Book is the first book, and all human books are imitations. The revelation of truth from above was the precursor and stimulator of human thought. And the Word, written by Divine command, for preservation, was the grand archetype and suggester of all other books.*

The truth is that the human mind desires light on the higher class of subjects. It looks into itself in vain for replies to the soul's great questions. Men everywhere distrust themselves and confess their own ignorance. The heart yearns for an infallible foundation on which to rest in peace, and the intellect longs for the rule of an infallible guide; something that shall speak to it out of the invisible and unknown, telling it, with authority, of unknown and invisible things. Thus does humanity grope for the Rock of Ages, and is not satisfied until it finds it. These words of the Psalm express a feeling latent in the heart of universal man: "As the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God." Here is the want, and the revealed word of God is the supply. "When I found thy words, I did eat them, and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart."

As children in a family naturally run to the father for guidance in perplexity, and for an explanation of things not understood, so the great family of man as

* We believe of course in a Holy Book or Books before the time of Moses.

naturally and normally looks up to the heavenly Father for guidance in the day of trouble, and for a definite solution of the great problems of spiritual thought. And when God speaks, or they believe He speaks, men will listen, but not otherwise. The Divine Voice, coming through the darkness, they will reverence and obey, but no other. None other whatever could penetrate the conscience, awaken the spiritual life, command the obedience, or renew the hearts of men.

Look at it from one other point, — the end or Divine purpose for which men are created. As it is expressed in the writings of the church, this end is "that there may be a heaven out of the human race." This, then, is the object of all this world. This is the seminary where all this training and preparation are to go on. For this cause the Creator has built up this great material universe, by processes millions of years long, filling it with every conceivable form of useful instrumentality, and covering it at last with multitudes of people, who, as the years roll by, rise into being, open their minds and hearts to the varied thought and feeling of life, develop their characters, and then pass forward to their final state. This world being all the while the grand seminary, the divinely constructed and appointed schoolhouse, where they were to learn the great truths of being, — the nature and attributes of God, their own relations to Him, their duties here and hereafter, the orderly laws of their own souls' growth, the infallible rules of justice and virtue, and their own immortal destiny, — that so, they might attain to the divine end of their creation, and by

giving heed to holy instructions, be prepared to live in heaven, in the presence of the Lord, forever.

Would the Lord, after having fitted up the Seminary on so grand a scale, have omitted the most important instrument of all, — a Book, or a series of Books, out of which the necessary truths could be learned? A written work, a repository of the knowledge to be gained, is an indispensable condition to the attainment of the object in view. Is it probable, therefore, or even credible, that after having done so much, the Lord should fail to provide an adequate and appropriate Book? No, my friends, a world without a Bible would be as great an anomaly, and as little conformable to reason, as a college or high school with no library, maps, charts, or books of instruction. The central instrumentality of the whole scheme would be wanting.

Here, then, we stand, with the Word of God authenticated to the reason, attested by every antecedent probability that can be rationally urged, and confirmed by the constant presence of such a Book, as an actually existing, long-established, and successive historical fact. The simple chronology of its authorship, spanning the ages, stretching through a long series of individual prophets, of different eras, and peoples, and tongues, for four or five thousand years, yet preserving through all a compact unity of purpose and plan, of precept and doctrine, transcending, as it does, all human ability, goes very far in attesting its Divine origin.

Next, then, as to the character of this Book, coming thus from God, and addressed to man. We believe it to be imbued with the qualities of the Divine Mind,

and to be as different from a merely human book as any other Divine work has points of essential difference from anything man can do.

Many aver that the Scripture is to be searched like any human composition ; that it is to be treated precisely like any other book, and its whole meaning ascertained in the same way, — from the plain grammatical sense. If the Bible were precisely like all other books, this rule would hold good ; but inasmuch as in some most important respects it is wholly unlike any other composition that ever existed, it is essentially an erroneous maxim of interpretation, and can never bring forth the truth out of the sacred volume. The common import of the letter is to be understood in that way, but the deeper meaning concealed within, the *spirit*, which gives life to the letter, and in which resides the heavenly quality of the writing, cannot be reached or evolved by that process.

As we have seen, it is a Divine composition ; something extraordinary, something entirely aside from and beyond every work of human art. It is not simple, as many affirm ; it is the most wonderful and complex production in the universe, corresponding to the Infinite Mind that produced it. It is the Maker speaking to his creatures, — “the language of God in the language of men.” And while it has therefore an external, human element by which it is related to the outward world and the natural apprehension, it has also an internal, Divine element, looking upward towards God and heaven. Divine love and Divine wisdom have filled its pages full of meaning, so full that men cannot fathom it all, it will be the study and the wonder and the source of light to angels and the spirits of the just forever.

It was written for a spiritual purpose, — with a spiritual end in view, to accomplish spiritual results, and has a *spiritual sense* or meaning running through every portion of it, parallel to, and yet distinct and distinguishable from the letter. It is in the spiritual sense or meaning that its essential qualities reside; that is the sense which constitutes the heavenly glory of the Word, — the sense which evolves the most wonderful things of wisdom to the thought, — and the sense which is open to the understanding of the angels. Could the Divine Mind speak, uttering its thought, without speaking what would be wisdom for angels as well as for men?

As just quoted, it is “the language of God in the language of men,” a twofold book for a twofold being, unfolding continually new and higher meaning as the understanding is opened to perceive it. As man has two natures, one relating him to the outward world and to common affairs, the other relating him to God and heaven and eternal life, so the Bible is given with two parallel lines of thought, one for the natural mind, to arrest, instruct, and lift it up, the other for the spiritual mind, to enlighten, to feed and nourish it in the elements of eternal life.

This complex nature of the Divine Word is strictly conformable to all we know of the Creator’s operations everywhere. They are complex while man’s are simple. Man’s operations are confined to the surface of a thing; he merely fashions substance, and smooths over the outward form. But God creates substance, and imparts the interior laws of its growth and composition. The genius of a human artist is all visible on the outside of his production, but the wonderful

wisdom of the Creator is found displayed in the inside structure of things, — in the chemistries and physiologies of natural objects. Man makes a statue in the likeness of a human being, by chiselling the outside of a stone, or moulding the bronze, into a given shape ; but the Lord, the Creator, fashions the human body into a living structure, its interior parts leaping with motion and replete with vitality throughout, and concealing a whole world of wonders, — of organ within organ and function within function, — beneath the surface.

Shall not the Divine Book, then, in like manner, transcend every human book, in the depths of its wisdom, in the structure of its thought, in the style of its composition, in the multiplicity of its meaning, in the complexity of its parts? Man makes a book, transcribing the outward image of a thought, but God utters supreme wisdom, the very substance of truth itself, the laws of spiritual existence, the living structure out of which spring the everlasting ideas of thought.

This remarkable character of the Divine Word is abundantly confirmed from the pages of the Book itself. Take as an instance the chapter in which the text occurs, — the first chapter of Ezekiel. The prophet being brought by Divine influence into a state of the spirit, "the heavens were opened" unto him, and he "saw visions of God." With the senses of his spiritual body thus opened and brought into exercise, that he might be able to see and hear things in the other world, we then read further, that "The Word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel, the priest, * * * and the hand of the Lord was there upon him."

A vision of the Holy "Word" was then unfolded to him. And what a stupendous exhibition of symbolism is there brought to view! Did any one ever elsewhere read anything like it? What a wonderful cluster of emblematic figures is there presented, and how gorgeous and glorious is the entire array! How involved and intricate do the different parts appear! — a chapter which the Jewish youth were not allowed to read till thirty years of age. Does it seem as though the meaning of the different parts could ever be distinctly made out. What commentator, from Origen to Olshausen, has given an explanation of this vision? Not one. And yet every symbol has a meaning, each standing for a distinct thought, the whole cohering in a most beautiful order. In the letter, the vision is without definite meaning; it is in the spiritual sense, as explained in the writings of the New Jerusalem, that the meaning becomes not only clear, but sublime.

Here, as already said, we have a representative picture of the Divine Word itself: "The Word of the Lord" coming "expressly to Ezekiel, the priest;" — a description given from heaven of the wonderful things contained and involved in the Word of the Lord. Its inspiration or procedure from the Lord himself, its living connection with Him, its descent through heaven, its descent to and operation upon the earth, the wonderful nature of its truths, and its great glory when seen in its true light, are all distinctly portrayed.

The first thing the prophet saw was a *whirlwind* coming out of the north, bearing along a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself; with a brightness shining

forth out of the midst of it and round about it like the color of amber. The vision of a whirlwind, — a powerful, involved, and circular motion of air, — on a grand scale, applied to the Sacred Scripture, means that it is a work of the Holy Spirit, that it is inspired from on high, — "God-breathed," as it is expressed in the original tongue. For the invisible atmosphere in motion, producing visible effects, or, the wind, blowing where it listeth, we hearing the sound thereof, yet knowing not whence it cometh or whither it goeth, — is everywhere used in the Sacred Scripture as the natural symbol of *spirit* and its operations ; especially of the Holy Spirit, or Divine breath of the Lord. The "GREAT CLOUD" which the whirlwind bore along, is the "letter" of the Word ; the outward, natural, plain, grammatical meaning. This is uniformly the signification of that prophetic symbol ; because in the letter Divine truth has descended to man's atmosphere, and become involved in the obscurities of his perceptions ; for the literal sense is the human element running through all the Bible. And the letter really clouds and obscures the bright effulgence of divine truth, and the fulness of its glory, as that is seen in the spiritual world, and in heaven, and as it may be seen by men on earth when the spiritual sense is explained to them. The letter is the cloudy vail hung before the inner glory, — "the vail that is spread over all nations, — the covering cast over" the understandings of "all people ;" at the same time concealing and revealing the ineffable light of Divine truth, as a cloud of rolling cumulus in the sky allows the passage of distinct sunbeams through its openings, yet hides the full blaze of the solar body behind its folds.

The infolding *fire* which the prophet saw behind the cloud, giving forth from itself its amber glory as it moved along, is the spiritual meaning of the Word, everywhere behind and within the letter, filling it with heavenly light and heat, and manifesting in every part Divine love in active exercise, — the infinite goodness of the Lord shedding forth from itself the holy illumination of Divine wisdom.

Space does not allow for unfolding the signification of all the things which the prophet saw, — those wonderful living creatures, with their numerous emblematic accompaniments; we have time now only for saying that as a whole they represent those living and moving powers of the spiritual world which the Lord in His infinite wisdom makes use of to operate upon and to influence the minds of men; emanating from Himself, flashing from their every side the lightning of His penetrating and searching truths, surrounded in their high and dreadful rings by the innumerable eyes of the Divine intelligence, omniscience, and circumspection; touching with their lowest principles, their “wheels” or feet, the very earth on which men stand and move, yet reaching, in their highest or topmost principles, like Jacob’s ladder, up through the heaven of angels, to the very throne of the Eternal One Himself; exhibiting to view the likenesses, of things animate and inanimate, high and low, — taking on every form necessary to adapt themselves to the manifold wants of *mind* on every plane of being, in every grade of its intelligence, — ascending and descending, human and angelic; and all these, — the complex and — to human view — involved, yet divinely appointed influences by which universal mind is affected and

moved, is awakened, regenerated, lifted up and drawn towards heaven, and sustained in heaven, — all these dwelling and abiding in the letter of the Word of God, which is the fulcrum of their power and the medium of their operations ; the body, indeed, in which this is contained as a living soul. "For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels."

Hence we have a clear and intelligent reason for believing the Bible an entirely different collection of writings from all other books. We can state distinctly where its inspiration resides, and give a definite idea of what that inspiration consists in. It is this divine or heavenly element, this spiritual or angelic sense, this wheel within the wheel, or meaning within meaning, that constitutes it.

"For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels." This is a remarkable and significant expression, and is repeated twice in the passage. And the meaning is that the spiritual sense is everywhere within the literal sense of the Word. In the symbolical vision, as we have seen, the wheels were the lowest parts of the complex figure, — the feet, as it were. And they denote the lowest principles of the Scripture, the external things of the letter ; for it is by, or in and through these that the spirit of truth from on high moves along over the plane of earthly things, adapting itself to the common level of human thought and feeling, and touching, with the influences of its living fires, the stratum of being in which the sensuous mind of unregenerated humanity habitually resides.

Hence, everywhere, throughout the Word of God, there is this "spirit" within the "wheel" of the

“letter,” — this heavenly meaning within the natural meaning, like a soul in a body ; this is so, even where it least appears outwardly, — in law and history, in doctrine, in psalm and prophecy, in precept and parable.* The passage before us which declares this truth is worthy our special attention.

“And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them ; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go ; and the wheels were lifted up over against them : for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, these went ; and when those stood, these stood ; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them ; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.” A most significant declaration ; and what more impressive or distinct mode can be thought of for picturing the constant and vital connection there is between the spiritual meaning and literal meaning of the Scripture ? There is no movement of the letter but on account of and for the sake of the spiritual sense. Every single expression in the grammatical sense is dictated and determined by the flow and the demands of the spiritual idea to be represented. And thus the letter is everywhere “lifted up” and glorified by “the spirit of life” within it. Every natural idea expressed in the letter has some spiritual idea to which it corresponds, and which it covers or clothes.

When the Lord speaks to an angel, He does not

* See note A, at the end of the volume.

speak to him in purely Divine language, expressive of purely Divine thought ; for if He did, the angel could not understand Him ; it would be above his apprehension. But the Lord adapts Himself to the angel's capacities ; He speaks to him in a language he is accustomed to hear (or at least can understand), clothing His Divine thought in forms and ideas such as He finds in the angel's mind, which are most suitable to His purpose.

And so when He speaks to a man through an angel, He does not speak to him in the purely Divine language, nor yet in the purely angelic language, for then the man would not understand Him ; it would be beyond the range of his knowledge and out of the reach of his thought. But he selects from the man's mind such knowledges and such ideas and memories as are best fitted to image and convey the Divine and angelic meanings He wishes to communicate, and with His heavenly ideas thus veiled, or clothed and covered, He speaks to the man in the man's own language, and in a style of thought which he can, more or less, understand and appreciate.

It is thus that the Word of the Lord was given to the prophets ; it was thus the Law was given to Moses ; thus that the Psalms were given to David ; and thus, too, that the Word of the New Testament was written. And so we have a Divine element, together with a human element, throughout the Sacred Scripture.

It is a common expression found in theological writings of the day, that the Divine and human elements are "commingled" with each other in the Bible. And the idea connected with it seems to be

quite vague and indistinct, as of a confused mixing of one thing with another. But this is not so. Properly speaking, there is no mingling of the Divine with the human in any instance. The two elements are perfectly distinct, and always separable from each other, running in parallel lines, but never crossing; the earthly elements clothing the heavenly, as the nicely-fitting garments of a man clothe his body.

It is to be noted, also, that even what is called the human portion, — the expressions of natural thought and feeling in the literal sense, — are, in a very important sense, a Divine work. For the materials out of which that portion is woven were all first divinely superintended and prepared, and then divinely selected and arranged, like so many carefully polished stones, in that grand, inimitable mosaic, constituting the literal ground or table of Holy Scripture.

This great fact, — the necessity in the nature of things for the existence of this human material as a literal basis for a Divine Word, — is strikingly, and at the same time beautifully set forth in a transaction recorded in the Book of Exodus, — a transaction divinely ordered, and then recorded in the Word, that it might dramatize and thus represent this very truth. We read that at first Jehovah himself fashioned two tables of stone, and wrote on them with His own finger all the words of the Law. This was to signify that the utterance of the Word, or the proclamation of Divine truth, is the work of Jehovah Himself; and that it is possible for Him to give it an outward expression quite different from what it now wears, and stripped of those particulars of human thought and feeling which we now find in the letter.

And we read further, that Moses was sent, with these two Divine tables, down from the mountain. And as he approached the camp of Israel, bearing them in his hand, he discovered the people committing idolatry, in worshipping a golden calf; which when Moses saw, he threw the tables from him, and brake them there beneath the mount. This was to signify that such a Word would not reach the apprehensions of such a people. It would be too pure, too high above the plane of their accustomed thought and feeling. The human heart, in its fallen state, is attached to its idols, and must be lifted up before it can adopt from love the purities of Divine truth.

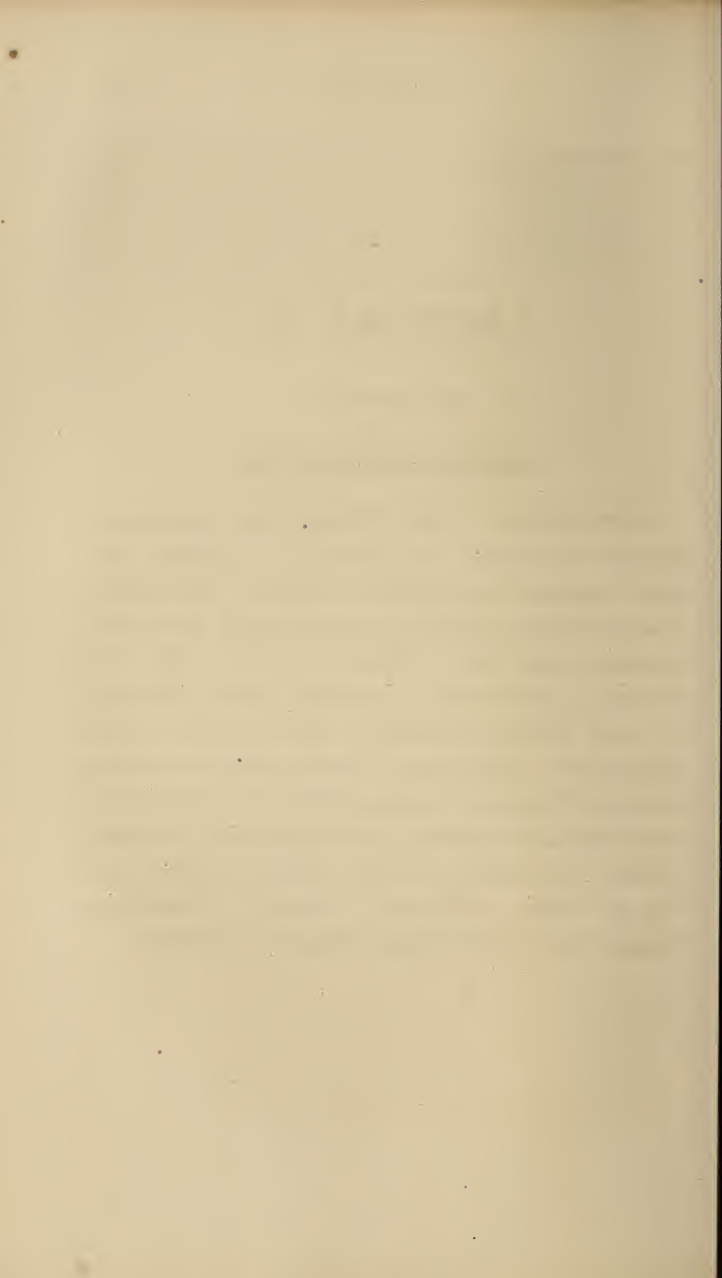
Two other tables were therefore commanded to be made. But this time Jehovah did not make them. Moses made them, in the manner commanded by Jehovah. Thus was the human element called in to coöperate with the Divine. And then the Lord caused to be written on those new tables prepared by the hand of Moses, "*all the words that were written on the first tables.*" So the second tables contained every truth that was inscribed on the first. By all which is signified that the letter of Sacred Scripture is made conformable to human states, to meet the forms of thought and feeling of the people among whom it was written; true both of the Old Testament and the New. But yet, notwithstanding the necessity of such conformity, in bridging the distance between God and man, the heavenly meaning, the spiritual sense, remains the same; for the principles of Divine truth are eternal in their nature, remaining unchangeable from age to age, — the same "yesterday, to-day, and forever."

Having thus endeavored to portray something of the nature or character of the Divine Word, our next Lecture will be devoted to the key of its interpretation, or the general method by which its spiritual meaning may be ascertained and learned.

LECTURE II.

SECOND INTRODUCTORY.

CONTENTS : — TWO METHODS OF INTERPRETING SACRED SCRIPTURE, — THE JEWISH, OR LITERAL, AND TRUE CHRISTIAN OR SPIRITUAL METHOD. THE ACTUAL PRESENT STATE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION HALF WAY BETWEEN THESE TWO, A MIXTURE OF BOTH. HOW THE SPIRITUAL SENSE MAY BE LEARNED, AND THE MEANING OF EACH SYMBOL DETERMINED. THE DOCTRINE OF CORRESPONDENCE, OR UNIVERSAL LAW OF ANALOGY BETWEEN SPIRITUAL THINGS AND NATURAL THINGS, THE GREAT KEY : WHEN THE LAW IS KNOWN, THE SCRIPTURE ITS OWN INTERPRETER. ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL SENSE, MEANING OF "FIRE," "WATER," "BREAD," "FLESH AND BLOOD," AND OTHER LITERAL EMBLEMS OR SYMBOLS.



LECTURE.

“ All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, ‘I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.’” — *Matt.* xiii. 34, 35.

This is the way in which the Lord always speaks to men, when He tells them of spiritual and heavenly things; the way in which He spake through His prophets, and the way in which He spake when He came into the world in person, uttering His own truth from His own lips. It is the universal law by which the Divine language falls into human language. For, as the direct rays of sunshine, darting through the (almost) empty spaces, are insufferable, and blasting to the human eye, yet, falling into the earth's atmosphere, become softened, refracted, mellowed, and diffused, thus offering an adapted and grateful medium to the sight, so the light of Divine truth, in descending to the atmosphere of human perception and thought, adapts itself, by a law inherent in the constitution of things, to the conditions and wants of our mental vision.

This law (of which we have spoken) is the law of

spiritual correspondences, according to which natural and visible things are the types or emblems of spiritual and invisible things. This is not a fanciful relationship, originating in the thought or imagination of man ; it is organic, i. e. actually inwrought into the system of nature, originating in the mind of the Divine Author Himself. It is the grand truth expressed by the Apostle, where he says, "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." Thus all nature is, by Divine intention and appointment, one great cluster of symbols, — a vast theatre in which Divine ideas are embodied, and where spiritual and heavenly things are imaged and portrayed. The earth, the sea, the air, the starry heavens, the animal creation, the human form, with their moving powers and manifold manifestations, — instinct with a life from above themselves, are so many living charts or hieroglyphical tables adorning the walls of this great schoolhouse of the race, speaking to them of God, of heaven, and eternal life ; picturing forth the Divine goodness and the Divine truth in the endless variety of their forms, laws, and operations, the inner world all the time speaking to the soul while the outer one addresses the senses.

Hence, when the Divine Book is opened, the Divine charts are explained ; and again, when the charts are understood, the meaning of the Book is more clearly opened and illustrated ; for the Author of both is One, while the language and style are the same.

The laws and processes of the natural kingdom correspond to the laws and processes of the spiritual

kingdom, setting them forth in a visible and tangible manner to the thought and apprehension of the natural mind, while in the Sacred Scripture those natural processes are used as types or symbols of the spiritual processes to which they correspond. Hence the origin of the phrase we employ when we say, that the Bible is written according to correspondences.

One or two examples will illustrate this idea. Take the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, in the third chapter of John. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Here, as we see, a natural process is named to set forth an inward or mental process, and the idea is further illustrated in the conversation which there follows. Natural birth is an entrance into life, the beginning of a new state of existence; and corresponds therefore to that mental operation by which the plane and current of a man's soul is changed. By the birth of a new love within him, his affections are changed, and he begins a new state of existence; it is an entrance into spiritual life, and so, by continuous growth, into heavenly and eternal life. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."

Take again, for a second illustration, those other words of our Lord, to the multitude on a certain occasion: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." — *John* vii. 51.

Here quite a complex idea is involved, as a process

is hinted at composed of a number of parts or elements. These words suggest at once not only the idea of food and eating, but also of assimilation, — of nourishment and the sustentation of life. And that complicated process by which the life of the body is ministered to and maintained, is used as a type of that other process by which the true life of the soul is fed, and nourished, and sustained.

In these two instances, we have a type of the Divine method of communicating spiritual thought in human language. Two distinct classes of ideas are involved. A natural idea serving as the basis of a spiritual idea, the natural covering the spiritual, like a drapery over a statue, or containing it within, as a casket holds the jewels entrusted to its keeping.

Many, perhaps most persons, will be disposed to say, "O, yes, we understand that ; this is the *figurative* language of Scripture." But we shall be very apt to deceive ourselves in using phrases like this, unless we consider carefully the ideas we entertain in regard to it. If we mean that these are figures after the manner of comparisons and metaphors found in human literature, we fall into an error. For these are not *mere* figures, but Divine analogies, founded from creation in the nature of things ; particular instances of that great law of universal analogy between things natural and things spiritual springing from the conceptions of the Infinite Mind, impressed on the visible world, of which the comparisons, figures, metaphors, tropes, allegories, and similitudes found in human literature, are but shadows and faint imitations.

But this human faculty of perceiving and speaking by images and emblems, so prominent in the language

of the race, is a type, — an image, or likeness, — of that Divine faculty which produced the law, and which vivifies its action through all time.

Thus in inspired language we have two parallel lines of thought, running along on the two distinct planes of perception and knowledge. This is the distinguishing feature of plenary inspired language. And these two lines of thought running through the Word, give rise to two distinct and very different modes of interpretation, the literal and the spiritual. They may also, not improperly, be termed the *Jewish* and the *True Christian*, for the Jewish method is literal, while the True Christian is spiritual. Illustrations of these two methods occur in the passages in which our two examples are recorded. Nicodemus replied, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” His thought was directed to the natural idea; he interpreted the Lord’s words literally. But our Lord immediately gave them another interpretation, opening up the two parallel lines of thought in contrast with each other, transferring the mind from the natural to the spiritual plane for the true meaning; thus, — “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.”

So, too, in respect to those other words, in which He declared Himself to be the living bread that came down from heaven, — as soon as he had uttered them, “the Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying,

How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" This is according to their usual method of interpretation, — the way in which they have commonly understood all Divine language, the way in which they understood the prophets; — fastening upon the natural idea, but never lifting their thought to the spiritual idea which was the inspired meaning.

And as our Lord on that occasion continued, saying, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." * * * "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me," "many, therefore, of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" Even they, having then been only partially instructed in heavenly things, were only half prepared to apprehend His real meaning.

What, then, is the true Christian idea connected with these expressions? The Christian world at large gathers from them the general idea that our Lord came to impart spiritual life. But what is the specific thought connected with each separate symbol? This is a question which, we presume, we should ask of the prevailing theological literature in vain.

We will endeavor to explain them as we are instructed to in the writings of the New Jerusalem.

The Bible is God's Book for man, and is everywhere written with express reference to his spiritual constitution. At the creation, we read that God breathed into him the breath of life, *and man became a living soul*. In the original tongue it is said that He "breathed into him the breath of *lives*." These "two lives" of his soul are those which man has by virtue of the two grand departments of his nature, the Understanding and the Will, by the exercise of which

fundamental faculties he lives, as it were, two lives, — a life of affection and a life of thought ; or, one life of emotion, feeling, desire, and another life of knowledge, intelligence, reason.

The Sacred Scripture makes constant reference to these two grand faculties in man ; and hence so many of its symbols occur in pairs, as silver and gold, sun and moon, wood and stone, beasts and birds, corn and wine, and, in the passage before us, flesh and blood. The Lord feeds these two faculties of the mind, and in a substantial sense, is Himself the bread which is eaten.

He was, Himself, the embodiment of the Divine goodness. He felt all the love which constitutes that goodness, and He acted that goodness towards and before men. Thus He communicated, and still communicates, to them a knowledge of it. He taught them in words what it was and is ; He brought it to them in His acts, He manifested it before them in a visible life among men, so that they could see it, understand it, be affected by it, appreciate it.

This is what is meant by His giving unto men His flesh to eat, — communicating to them this knowledge of His Divine goodness, to feed their emotional nature, to feed their affections. For if men will be affected by His goodness, will accept it, receive, appropriate it, by loving and copying it, by reciprocating His love, and acting out similar love towards others, it will feed their souls, and nourish them to heavenly and eternal life.

The “ blood ” has reference to the intellectual nature, and means that He likewise communicates a knowledge of His truth to the understanding. He

was Himself the truth, — the Word made flesh. The Divine truth was the very life-blood of His soul, the vital principle which constituted His wisdom and circulated through all His acts. He communicates a knowledge of this truth; He taught it in words, He exemplified it, he lived it. If man drinks this blood, if he imbibes this truth, believes it, loves it, seeks to understand it, and regulates his conduct by it, it will enlarge his understanding, building up the rational part of his being and making him wise unto salvation. Hence He says, “he that *believeth* on me shall never *thirst*,” — *belief* being an act of the *understanding*.

Thus He feeds, — or nourishes and sustains, — both departments of man’s spiritual being, — the heart *and* the head, or the will and the intellect. Such, then, is the true Christian idea of those words.

But this spiritual flesh and blood, — this knowledge of goodness and this knowledge of truth, — are something which come to us from without; we acquire them through the senses, and appropriate them by acts and the exercise of faculties which are our own, and of which we are conscious. And in order that the Divine work in us may be complete, in order that we may have effected in us all we need to have effected, it is necessary that we should be the subjects of still other influences, viz: the invisible operation of the spirit influencing us to will and to do, — moving upon us from within, and of which motions we are *unconscious*, save from their effects.

And hence our Lord also is said to communicate these influences. For we read, in the words of John the Baptist, “He that cometh after me is mightier than I. * * He shall baptize you with the Holy *spirit*

and with *fire*." Here we find the same duplicate form of expression, referring to the two human faculties. The baptism of the Holy Spirit denotes the Lord's internal operation upon the understanding, illustrating a man's mind, enabling him to see and understand the truth, while the baptism of *fire* symbolizes a similar operation upon the heart, filling it with love, disposing it to accept the truth, and inspiring the affections with a desire for the things of the Lord's kingdom, — a desire for a good and heavenly life.

Thus we see the simplicity, the spirituality, and the beautiful order or definite regularity of the Divine Word. It does not deal in mere generalities, or vagueness, like the imaginations of men. The spiritual sense is distinct and definite in its ideas, giving clearness and fixity to the letter. And how important it is that the Word of God should be so written. How much more powerfully does it affect the mind, speaking thus directly to the heart in strong natural symbols which all can see and feel, than if it dealt more abstractly with spiritual subjects! Our thoughts and our feelings most naturally run in this low plane, and the truth must descend thither to arrest the thought and awaken the emotions.

We have just brought into view a new symbol; we have said that the *baptism of fire* means a new flame of life enkindled in man's heart by the Lord, and that flame is a love for heavenly things. Fire, then, means *love*, being the divine emblem of it in nature; not only divinely chosen to symbolize it, but also divinely created to be an image of it. Let us remember this when we turn to the Divine Book, and see how many passages it will unlock for us, — see how much new

meaning will break forth to us from many of its pages. The meaning is definite, distinct, clear ; *fire* stands for *love*, and for nothing else.

But there are many kinds and degrees of love, good and evil. There is Divine love, and angelic love, and human love. Then there is the love of truth, the love of what is good, and love to the neighbor ; as well as a love of wickedness, of what is false, a love of revenge and cruelty ; in short, diabolical love, in all its forms and degrees, which delights in doing what is perverse, disorderly, and wrong.

Now all these kinds of love are spoken of in the Scripture, being commended or condemned according to their quality. And they are all symbolized by *fire*, — fire of different kinds and origins, the ground emblem remaining the same.

With this key in our hands, how many seals of the Divine Book are opened to us ! We shall know the spiritual meaning of that *pillar of fire* by which the Lord led His people by night in the wilderness ; we see that it is the way in which He leads them in every age, speaking to them in love, and holding them fast by their affections. We can see the meaning of those fires, holy and pure, which the Lord enjoined the children of Israel to keep burning upon his altars ; and of those words of Moses to the people, where he says, of God, “ Out of Heaven He made thee to hear His voice, that He might instruct thee ; and He showed thee His *great fire*.” We shall remember, too, with a new sense of their significance, the horses of *fire* and chariot of *fire* in which the Lord caused the prophet Elijah to be taken up into heaven. These words of the Psalm, too, will occur to us as confirmatory of

this meaning of *fire*; — “ My heart was *hot* within me ; while I was musing, the *fire burned* ; then spake I with my tongue.” And as we reflect upon it, we shall be led to a deeper sense of the spiritual meaning of that remarkable vision of the prophet, in which the angel of Jehovah took the tongs that were beside the altar, and took a live coal from the *fire* burning upon the altar, and laying it upon the lips of the prophet, bade him then go forth and prophesy in His name, — this act of the angel denoting the inspiration of holy love from the Lord, impelling him to speak.

So of innumerable other instances to which we have not space to refer.

We shall be equally enabled also to understand those other passages in which that perverted and wicked love is spoken of which serves to inflame the bad passions and corrupted affections of men, and unclean spirits. We shall first see it typified in that *strange fire*, which Nadab and Abihu brought to the altars of the Lord, and of which strange fire they both subsequently died. We shall remember it, confirmed in many passages of the prophets, of which this is one : “ For wickedness burneth *as a fire* ; it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest. * * * And the people shall be as the *fuel of the fire*.” — Is. ix. 18, 21.

And again, in another place, — “ Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, send among His fat ones leanness ; and under His glory He *shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire*. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and His Holy One for a flame ; and it shall burn and devour His briers and His thorns in one day ; and shall *consume* the glory of His forest and

of His fruitful field, *both soul and body.*" This is what their own evil lusts will do, even to the Lord's people, if they forget Him and turn away again to their own follies, — the selfish and worldly things which they formerly loved.

Thus does the Holy Word declare its own meaning, and we have a Divine key to the sacred symbols.

And with this knowledge in mind we shall no longer be in doubt as to the meaning of *hell fire*, several times mentioned in the New Testament; and the reason why it is called also the *fire unquenchable*, will also readily occur to us, viz: because it is the nature of evil love, or unhallowed desire, never to be satisfied, but to reach forth continually for something more, and so to burn on in its cravings forever.

One other emblem was mentioned in our Lord's words to Nicodemus, which we passed over at the time, but which we will now speak of for a moment.

He said, — "Except a man be born of *water* and of the spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Born of *water*? What is the meaning of *water*? Can it be that the application of material water to the body, in any way, can in the least affect the moral character, or the spiritual state of the soul? Certainly not. And yet, we believe there are those who insist on the literal interpretation of this passage, and, that the passage has given rise to no little controversy.

But our Lord cannot mean material water here, as introducing the soul into the kingdom of God. He employs it as an emblem of something spiritual; for very soon after, in the very next chapter, and not many paragraphs from this conversation with Nicode-

mus, He converses with the Samaritan woman at the well, speaking again of *water* in His discourse. "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." At first she understood Him literally; she interpreted His words as some modern commentators do; she followed the Jewish method; she wanted a supply of *natural water*, which should remove the necessity of her going thither to draw.

But Jesus continued His discourse, and in a manner similar to that with Nicodemus, He opens up the two parallel lines of thought, the spiritual above the natural, directing the mind to the *spiritual* idea for His true meaning. This is the true method of Scripture interpretation, — the Divine method. "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

Thus, by His words we are directed to water of another order. What, then, specifically, we ask, is this water of the soul to which He refers? We reply, in the language of the New Church, it is *purifying truth*, — the first precepts of repentance and obedience. There is a certain class of truths in the Sacred Scripture designed for this purpose, and which have this effect. If we imbibe them, that is, if we receive the instruction they impart, and apply them to the life, they not only satisfy our thirst for practical knowledge, but they wash us spiritually, — they purify

the mind of its evil dispositions, and cleanse our conduct from its obvious sins. Such are the prohibitory commandments of the Law: "Thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

These are calculated to remove all those wrong things from our characters, and to purify us of them. Such truths as these are what are meant by the *waters* of the Divine Word; they prepare the soul for the operations of the Holy Spirit, and introduce the man who is obedient to them into the kingdom of the Lord. Similar to them are many precepts in the Gospels, inculcating repentance from evil works. They are what are meant, too, by the waters of baptism; the water employed in that holy ordinance having this meaning and signification.

With this key in our hand we may search the Bible anew, receiving definite and clear instruction from a multitude of passages which before yielded only an obscure or vague sense. In many cases, as we read, we shall see the spiritual meaning shine forth from the letter like a lamp of light; from the blessing pronounced in the First Psalm, upon the man, who, for his obedience to these truths, "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water," to that vision of holy waters beheld by Ezekiel, flowing forth in such abundance from the sanctuary of the Lord, purifying the land and giving life as they flowed along; and thence forward, through Old Testament and New, to that great river of the waters of life, clear as crystal, mentioned in the last chapter of Revelation, as proceeding out of the throne of God, and watering the

garden of God by the streets of the Holy City. And every passage we read will confirm the definite spiritual meaning of this sacred symbol.

There is, too, an opposite sense in which this general symbol is not unfrequently used in the Scripture. For when instead of the common truths of life and practice men imbibe perverted or false maxims of life and conduct, then they no longer drink *living waters*, but *waters of temptation*, an overrunning flood, devastating instead of cleansing. But of this opposite meaning we have now no space to bring forth examples.

From the few and brief illustrations of the spiritual sense of Scripture we have had time to introduce, there has been seen, we trust, *something* of that law by which angelic thought translates itself into human language; and thus, also, something of the law by which inspired language may be translated back again, and the angelic idea be evolved from the natural expression.

Such is the character of the Divine Word throughout, — a wheel within a wheel, — a spiritual meaning within a literal meaning; first, a continuous stratum of thought addressed to natural perception and feeling, and then, within or underlying that, another continuous stratum of thought addressed to spiritual perception and feeling. Even in those passages where at first we might least expect it, as in the histories of the Old Testament, though at first sight there is nothing but literal narrative, yet there it is, deep down, needing only an exposition, according to the laws of correspondences, to bring it out. This the Apostle Paul teaches in many places, especially in Galatians, where, speaking of the history of Abraham, and of his two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, and of Sarah and

Hagar, he says, "These things are an allegory," and that by the two females and their two sons, are represented the two covenants, the one gendering to spiritual freedom, the other to spiritual bondage. This explanation is according to correspondences. The Apostle here declares the *law* of those ancient histories, — they are all *divine allegories*; under a veil of true history setting forth things of the spiritual life; things relating to the regeneration of man, and to our Lord's great work of redemption and glorification. How often has this divine analogy been perceived in the history of the Israelites, especially in their journey from Egypt to the Holy Land, symbolizing as it does the life-long progress of the Lord's redeemed ones from their original state of sinfulness to a state of spiritual peace and rest, and so, to the heavenly Canaan above!

Hence David, when moved by inspiration, fervently prays, — "O Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." And our Lord, when He would fully instruct His disciples and prepare them for their work, "opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures;" and then, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself," saying unto them that all things written "in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms," concerning Him, must needs be fulfilled. And in the "Prophets," in those days, were included the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

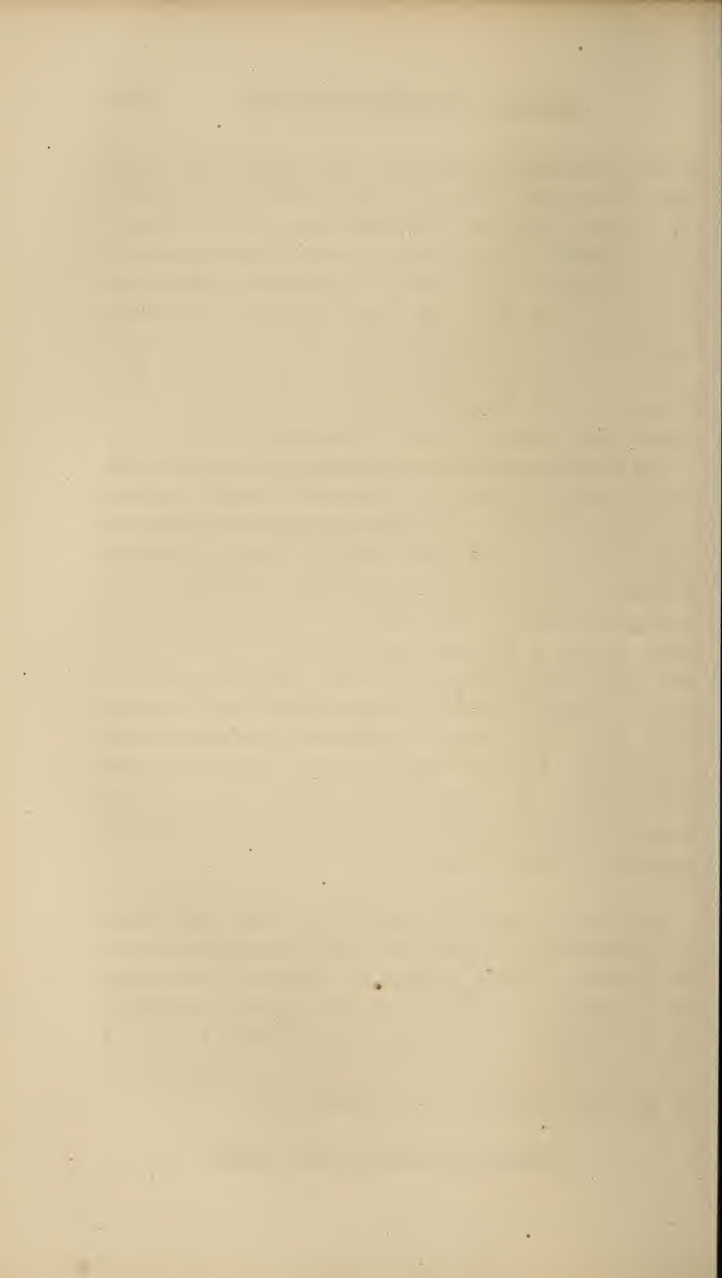
Thus the spiritual sense everywhere underlies the letter, as the granite rock in the earth's crust underlies all other strata. And as the granite, here and there,

at long intervals, penetrating the upper crust and rising into peaks, displays itself to the eye, visible and bare, so does the spiritual sense of the Word, here and there, at long intervals, crop out, as it were, showing itself on the surface, expressed in plain language, so that none can miss it. The two great commandments in Deuteronomy, of love to the Lord and love to the neighbor, the ten blessings in the Sermon on the Mount, the new commandment of mutual love, given in John, are instances of this.

And as the granite, though unseen, yet underlies all strata, giving support to all above it, whether sand or soil or gravel, so does the spiritual sense of the Word underlie all parts, whether history or Psalm, whether prophecy, commandment, or parable, constituting the great substratum, — the Rock of continuous divine truth, which is the rest and support of the whole. The literal sense may, and often does, appear disjointed, broken, confused, fragmentary; but the spiritual sense is always consistent, connected, and continuous. Like the inner vesture which our Lord wore while on the earth, it is “without seam, woven from the top throughout,” a continuous and unbroken garment of holy; Divine truth.*

And having now seen something of the right mode of interpreting Scripture, we shall be prepared to go forward in our next, and apply this law to unlocking the meaning of certain portions of prophecy, especially those relating to the second coming of the Lord, and the first three chapters of Revelation; and after that, to the other chapters of the same Book.

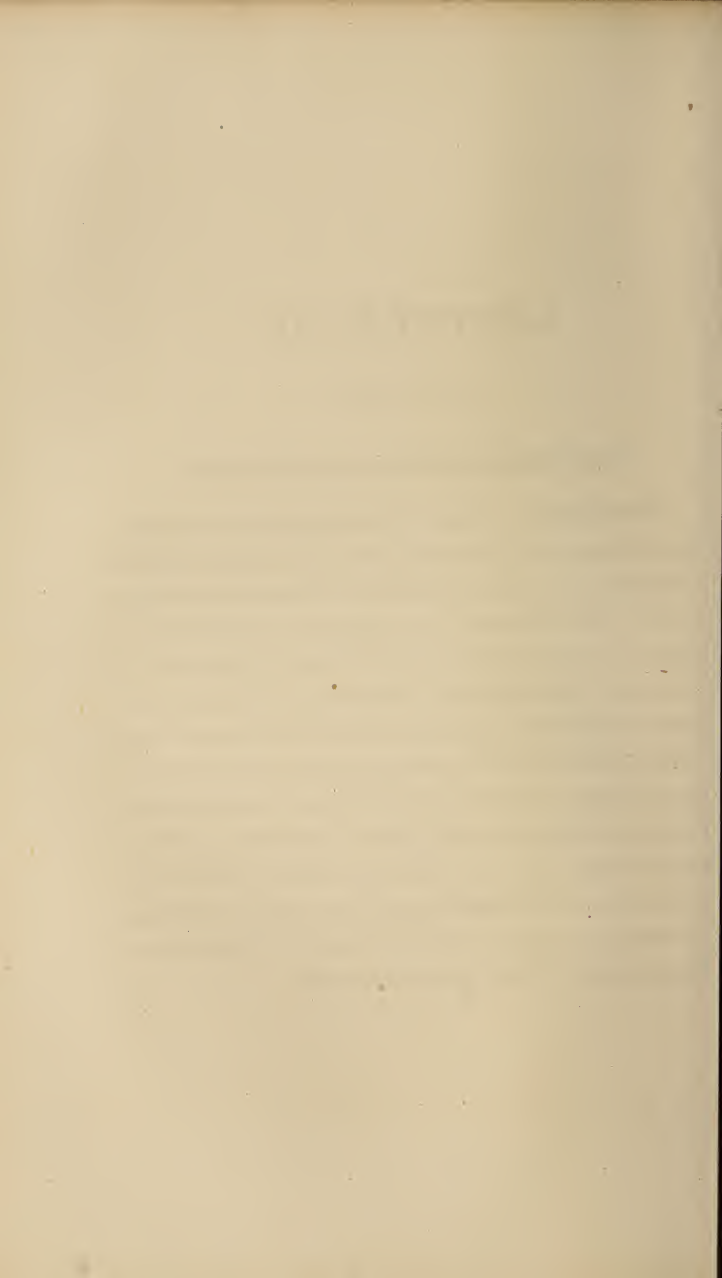
* See note B, at the end of the volume.



LECTURE III.

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD.

CONTENTS:—FIRST THREE CHAPTERS OF REVELATION; REMARKS ON INTERPRETATION; THE SECOND ADVENT A SPIRITUAL ADVENT, EFFECTED BY A DEFINITE INSTRUMENTALITY; THE MEANING OF “CLOUDS,” SYMBOLICAL OF THINGS IN THE LETTER OF THE WORD; EXAMINATION OF PASSAGES; THE BOOK OF REVELATION DISTINCTIVELY A BOOK OF THE NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH; REFERS TO THESE TIMES; THE SECOND ADVENT CONSISTS IN THE REVELATION OF THE SPIRITUAL SENSE OF THE WORD, — THE OPENING OF THE GREAT BOOK, THROUGH WHICH A NEW IDEA OF GOD IS COMMUNICATED, VIZ: THAT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY GOD, IN ONE PERSON, THE ONE “WHO IS, WHO WAS, AND WHO IS TO COME, — THE ALMIGHTY;” CONNECTION OF SWEDENBORG’S MISSION WITH THIS EVENT.



LECTURE.

“ Behold He cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see Him.”
— *Rev.* i. 7.

We have spoken of the Sacred Scripture ; of the two senses which it contains, — the natural and the spiritual ; and we have referred briefly to the two distinct modes of interpretation which these two parallel lines of thought have given rise to, namely, the literal, which we have denominated also the Jewish, and the spiritual, which we have also denominated the true Christian method. The actual state of Biblical interpretation in the Christian world around us is a middle ground, — half way between these two modes.

The Jews, adhering strictly to the former, are still expecting the advent of the Messiah as a temporal prince, to set up, and rule in, a powerful monarchy, of which their nation is to constitute the privileged aristocracy, whom all other nations are to serve as subjects and common people. But when our Lord came, He introduced a series of ideas of another order. He declared His kingdom to be not of this world, but a spiritual kingdom. He interpreted the prophecies in a new way, showing that, under an imagery of natural things, they really meant heavenly things ; and applying all those glowing and glorious promises

which before were supposed to relate and belong to the Jewish nation, to His own faithful disciples, — to the members of His spiritual kingdom throughout all lands. His Apostles followed Him, in a similar mode of interpretation, and when they quoted any of the prophecies of the Old Testament, gave them a corresponding meaning, evolving from them an idea above the letter, and which, until then, the letter, like a veil, had served to conceal.

Christian commentators have therefore followed them, at least to the extent of the passages they explained; but being unacquainted with the great law by which the spiritual sense is made clear, and not knowing that the spiritual sense is not confined to certain paragraphs, but extends to the whole Word, they have fallen into much confusion. For not distinguishing clearly between the two lines of thought existing everywhere, they fasten upon the *natural* idea in some places as the true and only meaning, while in other passages, where the symbolism is a little more obvious, they rise to the spiritual idea, declaring *that* to be the meaning. Hence there is no determinate method, every commentator being left to make his own conjectures and reason out his own conclusions. The prevailing system, therefore, is one composed partly of light and partly of darkness, with no key to open obscurities or harmonize conflicting views. Some commentators incline most to the Jewish method, attaching their thought to the outward symbol, and turning all things possible into the literal channel. Such men expect the Divine prophecies to take effect on the physical universe, and are looking for the destruction of the visible heavens and the habitable

globe ; they expect the Lord to come in person on the clouds floating in our earthly atmosphere ; they expect to see the distant stars fall from their places to the earth, and the solid ground consumed by fire.

But as the Jew has waited in vain, for 2500 years, for the realization of his idea of the Messiah's kingdom, and if he waits 2500 years longer, will still expect in vain, so will all those literalizing Christians who are looking for physical changes, and great visible demonstrations in material elements, at our Lord's second coming, be deceived, and may wait on, for thousands and thousands of years, in vain. For the Lord has founded the earth and the visible starry heavens to abide forever ; the earth to be the seminary of men, where they may be prepared for heaven, while the human race, on this globe, is never to be cut off.

The higher we look, the more we ascend into the holy mountain of the Lord, the more we elevate our thought to the great *spiritual* realities of which the Scriptures treat, leaving material things behind, the clearer will be the light shining in upon the soul, and the more we can see the interior and truly Divine qualities of the Scriptures, the more holy and pure will be the influence they will shed forth upon us, and the more powerfully will they operate upon our minds to cleanse them of earthly things, and thus to renovate and bless them.

What do the Scriptures teach concerning our Lord's second coming ?

We will briefly state what we are taught in the New Jerusalem. We are here told that the second coming of the Lord consists in the revelation of the spiritual

sense of the Bible. Here, as we have already attempted to show, is an interior, spiritual meaning, above and within the literal, running through the entire Word of God, and hitherto unknown, or known only in fragments ; the Lord now, therefore, effects an opening of His Word, making known its spiritual meaning, and revealing all those wonderful and hitherto undiscovered truths which that meaning contains. This is a new coming of His, into the world ; a new coming, in and through the Word ; a new coming, not in visible, bodily form, but in and through a new and fuller dispensation of His own truth.

Now let us examine, candidly and carefully, whether these things be not so. Let us read the prophecies in the light of the true Christian mode of interpretation, and see what it really is which they foretell.

In the 24th of Matthew, Our Lord says that He shall come in (or upon) the clouds of heaven with power and great glory ; and in our text, where the time of the fulfilment of this prophecy is spoken of, it is repeated, " Behold he cometh with clouds." What is the meaning here ? What is the prophetic sense of these words ? The natural idea of a cloud is plain enough, but what is the spiritual idea ? What do *clouds* symbolize ? We have already briefly stated, in the first Discourse, that *clouds* are typical of the *literal sense of the Scripture*, because in the *letter* Divine truth is clouded and obscured by the natural things therein expressed. And these natural symbols of the letter are what are meant by clouds and what are called clouds throughout the prophetic Scriptures, as might be clearly shown did space allow of a full citation of passages. A very few must suffice. Thus, the *cloudy pillar*, by which the Lord led

the Israelites through the wilderness, denoted the letter of Scripture, — Divine truth in obscurity, — by which He leads and instructs His people in all ages. The same thing is signified by the “great cloud” with which He enveloped Himself upon Mt. Sinai, when He came and delivered the Law to Moses. He always veils Himself with a covering of external truth, when He comes to speak to and instruct men. It is for this reason that in the prophetic language “the strength” of Jehovah is said to be “in the *clouds*,” that He “rideth upon the *clouds*,” that “His truth extendeth unto the *clouds*,” that Ezekiel saw *a cloud* filling the sanctuary of the temple. And the reason also why, in the prophecies of Daniel and the New Testament, the Lord is said to *come* in the *clouds* of heaven. The form of expression is worthy of being noted. The language always is, “in the clouds of *heaven*.”

When the spiritual meaning is thrown into the natural expressions of Scripture, it is like pouring a flood of sunlight upon and through a cloud in the sky, which thus, from being dark, becomes instantly bathed in glory, and lighted up from behind with golden brilliancy, and the richest-colored hues.

The light is already there, behind the cloud, but is now first made to break forth and shine through, by having that meaning explained, and so made apparent to the mental eye.

Thus we see, the moment we apply the key of correspondences to unlock the letter of the Word, we at once come at the meaning, and discover that we are to expect our Lord at His second coming to appear in and upon the literal sense of Scripture, by the light of Divine truth shining through it. Take also

that vision seen by the apostles at our Lord's ascension, recorded in the first chapter of Acts. We read that "while they beheld, he was taken up; and a *cloud* received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, — ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

We have turned to this passage especially, because it is the principal one employed to prove a visible, personal coming, and the only one, we believe, that is relied upon as giving that doctrine a sure foundation. But let us examine it in the light of the spiritual sense, and with the key in our hand. The apostles were then in holy vision. Men are not able to *gaze up into heaven* with their natural eyes, nor is our Lord's glorified and Divine spiritual body, or the forms of angels, visible to the mortal eye. John, in Patmos, informs us that he was *in the spirit* when he thus saw our Lord, and when the door in heaven was opened to him. The apostles, therefore, on that occasion, were in a state similar to that in which all the prophets were when they had their visions. The senses of their spiritual bodies were opened, and what they heard and saw they heard and saw in the spiritual world and not in the natural world.

This vision, therefore, is to be interpreted like the prophetic visions, and its symbols explained in the same way. The cloud there has the same prophetic meaning it has in all other places. It was typical of the letter of the word, through which His truth should

in the latter days be revealed. The two men in white raiment told them that He should come in like manner as they had seen Him go ; but those men were angels, and though they clothed their speech in natural language, we know that the angelic thought rests in the spiritual idea, and not in the natural symbol. Translating their words, therefore, according to the great rule already given, their expression means that when He should come again, He would come in and through the literal symbols of His own Divine Word. He had then come as the Divine Truth, as the Word made flesh, and He would come again as the Divine truth, as the same Word opened and explained. He had manifested himself once in personal form, and the Divine economy never repeats itself.

Hence, in accordance with this prophecy, where His coming is again foretold, in the fourth chapter of Revelation, it is described as an opening of the Book sealed with seven seals, and a disclosure from within it of what it contained. The Book there meant, is of course the Bible ; *the* one great Book, the Book of books. Now its seals are taken off when its meaning is explained according to the spiritual and real sense. The natural symbols are over this interior meaning like so many seals. And when the spiritual idea, veiled within a natural idea, is disclosed, the seal is taken off. Thus, when it is revealed to us that the *flesh* of our Lord, occurring in His word, denotes a knowledge of His goodness, that *fire* is uniformly typical of the flame of *love*, that *water* is the divinely chosen emblem of cleansing and purifying *truth*, the seals are then taken off from all those scriptural symbols, as well as from the passages in which they

occur ; and we instantly know their meaning. Thus we see what is meant by opening the Book. And in the writings of the New Jerusalem this is completely accomplished. The symbolism of the whole Divine Word is unfolded, and everything it contains made known, so far as men are capable of understanding. The accounts of the creation, of ante-diluvian history, of the Flood, of the Tower of Babel, the whole history of the descendants of Abraham, as well as the gospels and the prophecies, have, in these writings, their seals taken off, and their spiritual meaning disclosed.

Hence, also, where the Second Coming is still further symbolized, in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation, where the event is set forth under that stupendous imagery of the *white horse* and his Rider, it is said that he is to come as the Word of God. “ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse ; and He that sat upon him is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth he judge and make war ; His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns ; and He had a name written, which no man knew but he himself. And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called *The Word of God*.”

This, therefore, is the way in which He is to come, — as the *Word of God*. The meaning of this vision is, that in this new dispensation, He goes forth to enlighten the understandings of men, to communicate to them a better understanding of Himself, of His Divine Truth, and of the spiritual meaning of His Word.

But there is still one other mode in which this coming and these latter days are spoken of in the proph-

ets. It is uniformly characterized as a time of new and glorious light ; as a morning of great brilliancy and clearness ; as a day shining in fuller lustre, in which the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold, as the light of seven days. And the New Jerusalem is described as being lighted by a more effulgent glory from on high. Light is so universally acknowledged as the Biblical symbol of truth, that in common language it has come to be used as a synonyme of truth, and we need not, therefore, confirm its meaning. In Daniel, it is said that many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. We see, therefore, that the distinguishing feature of these new times, foretold by the prophets, is a remarkable increase of knowledge, and the diffusion of more glorious truth. But what kind of knowledge and what kind of truth do you suppose ? Not of mere physical science, or truth relating to natural things ! no ; a knowledge of divine and heavenly things, and such truth as can illumine the soul, and make it wiser in the things of the Lord's kingdom.

And our Lord himself says in Matthew, " For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be ; " and in another place, " For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth into the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in his day. "

Now what is lightning but the sudden breaking forth of greater light from heaven ? Natural lightning is of such a character, that though it occur in ordinary daylight, yet it causes itself to be seen as a flash of still

stronger light. And so this opening of the Divine Word as to its spiritual meaning, although it comes in an age when men are enjoying the common daylight of Christianity as revealed in the letter of the Bible ; yet, is a light of a so much stronger and intenser kind as to cause itself to be seen over and above all this ; and as it shines out over the world, it is capable of enlightening to a still higher degree the whole mental horizon.

And in that remarkable vision in the first chapter of Ezekiel, which we have already partly explained (in our first discourse), this same symbol is used to typify the inner glory—or spiritual meaning—of the Holy Word. For we there read, “As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of lamps : it went up and down among the living creatures ; and the fire was bright ; and out of the fire went forth *lightning*. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a *flash of lightning*.”

Such is the prophetic description of that *living* principle of the Holy Word which giveth light and life. Our Lord says, “I am the light of the world ;” “The words that I speak unto you they are *spirit* and they are *life* ;” while the apostle says, “the letter killeth ; it is the *spirit* that maketh alive.”

Thus, we find, on an examination of the prophecies, one remarkable fact, namely ; that all the different lines of symbolism, however they may differ in their specific forms, tend towards one result. They all look one way, converging to the same focus, describing, by a variety of emblems, one general truth, and all leading us to expect that the event to which they

relate will occur in one distinct and definite way. They all declare, with one voice, that the Lord's second coming is to consist in the opening of His Word and the consequent diffusion of a fuller measure of heavenly light or truth.

We have also seen, we trust, to some limited degree, the manner in which a knowledge of correspondences opens the meaning of the Divine Word, causing its chapters of otherwise obscure symbolism, to yield a clear, steady, rational, and uniform light. And we have exemplified, we hope, to the same extent, also, the true method of scriptural interpretation, which we have endeavored to show to consist, not merely in an apprehension of the natural idea described in the letter, nor in any mystical, or vague and unwarrantable meaning attributed to the letter, nor yet, in taking in one place the literal thought alone, and then in another, the spiritual thought alone, as the meaning, without definite rule; but in getting, in all cases, a distinct idea of both senses. First, a clear idea of the natural or literal meaning as a basis, and then, a clear and distinct idea of the spiritual thought to which the natural thought corresponds; thus giving to each of the two senses of Scripture, its full scope and meaning; remembering always that the heavenly meaning, the true angelic idea is lodged in the spiritual sense and not in the literal.

This is what is meant in those three places where it is said that the Lord will bring His holy angels with Him at his second coming. He will come in the clouds *with His* angels; and in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation, it is said that the armies of heaven followed Him upon white horses. By which is signified

that He comes to communicate to men a knowledge of the heavenly meaning of His Word, that henceforth they may, if they will, understand that Word as the angels do; and that the angels rejoice and coöperate with the Lord in His purpose of revealing this truth to men, and in influencing men to receive it.

We have now seen what is the nature of the Lord's coming; and before leaving this branch of the subject, we wish to invite distinct attention to two other points, which are suggested by words of our Lord in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. He there leaves two important cautions to his followers in relation to His coming. He says, first, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many." Now this caution is frequently read, but is it often reflected upon? What kind of idea do these words carry with them? — "*Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*" But how would it be possible to practise such deception, provided the coming of the Lord were to be of such a nature as is commonly supposed? How would it be possible for a man to lift himself up into mid-air, among the clouds of our atmosphere, there surround himself with angels, or what should appear to be angels, and with light and glory, and thus descend to the earth in great power, calling on men to worship and obey him? Manifestly, it could not be done. The event, as too commonly conceived, could not be imitated by man. It would be one in relation to which no deception could be practised, — one about which it would be

impossible there should be any mistake, for no finite power could produce such outward visible manifestations as those, or set the world on fire, or cause the visible stars to fall from the firmament.

This advice of our Lord is wholly inapplicable and entirely without meaning, if the event to which it refers were going to take place in that manner. And these quiet words of His, coming down thus across the centuries, ought of themselves to be sufficient to point our minds to some different sort of fulfilment. For most assuredly He would never condescend to give irrelevant or untimely advice.

But change the view for a moment. Let us look upon the second advent of the Lord in its true light, contemplating it as an event which introduces new and important truth into the world, and these words fall at once into their right places in our apprehension. We see their relevancy and pith. A revelation of truth, committed, as it necessarily is, to writing; consisting, as it necessarily does, of statements and doctrines printed and disseminated in books, as the Bible itself was, offers a field in which the imitative powers and deceptive ability of man may display themselves. A revelation of truth is a thing that may be feigned and pretended. Men have claimed to have a revelation from heaven when they had no such revelation, and thus have deceived the few or many who have followed them. To this kind of advent our Lord's words are entirely applicable. His followers everywhere are enjoined to "take heed." Open the eyes of the mind and inquire for yourselves. "Let no man deceive you." Exercise your own rationality; bring the spiritual and intellectual powers of your

minds into operation, and reason and judge for yourselves. "Search the Scriptures," and see whether these things be so. Read, compare, and examine. How else can you ever see the light or ever know the truth?

The other caution to which we referred is equally significant, and is in these words: "Then, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; Behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not." — Matt. xxiv. 23. Are men apt to regard attentively what these words imply? To *our* apprehension, they warn us explicitly against expecting a visible coming. Were He actually to come in person and appear anywhere in the world, it would be necessary to announce that fact by a "Lo here," or a "Lo there." We should be absolutely obliged to say that He had come *somewhere*, and in so doing should fall directly under the condemnation implied in this caution. We could not announce the second advent, if that were to have been a personal appearing, after it should have occurred, without contravening the words of this advice.

Clergymen who rely on a literal coming, have told me that they did expect the Lord to appear *in the desert* between Egypt and Palestine, on a white horse, and so ride up to Jerusalem, and set up His kingdom there in outward power and glory. But we are expressly

told by our Lord Himself that if any one comes to us in these latter days, with such an announcement as that, neither to go forth after it nor to believe it.

The more these things are pondered the more will it be seen that all our Lord's words refer to an event of a different nature. For immediately following this last caution He says, — "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." Not a local, visible, personal appearing, — some demonstration to the outward senses, — but a diffusion of light; a dissemination of truth and spiritual intelligence, flowing everywhere, and apprehensible by the rational thought.

Having thus seen what is the general nature of the Lord's second coming, let us turn now, in closing, for a few moments, to the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation. This Book refers to these times. The events it describes belong to the present age of the world. They began to unfold more than a hundred years ago, but their complete fulfilment, with the results to follow, will last on for all ages. The Book of Revelation itself is the starting-point of the New Dispensation. It is the closing Book of the canon, placed there to point men forward, through the first Christian ages, to that fuller dispensation promised in so many of the prophets. It is a Book, therefore, which, in a certain (quite intelligible) sense, may be said to be distinctively the Book of the New Church, — the New Jerusalem. It is so, because the New Church is founded upon it, and is described in it. It is so, again, because the New Church understands it, and can make use of it and explain it.

The first three chapters comprise a general introduction to the Book, announcing its Divine authority, and invoking at length the special and conscientious attention of the Christian Church to the contents of its prophecy. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," is the oft-repeated injunction.

The most remarkable feature of this introduction is the clear and distinct declaration made with respect to the Trinity and Personality of the Lord. In the New Jerusalem we are taught to look to and to worship the Lord Jesus Christ, — a single person, — as the only God of heaven and earth, as the Supreme Jehovah, clothed with and appearing in a human form. It is for this reason that the Church of the New Jerusalem is called, in the latter part of the Book of Revelation, "the Bride, the Lamb's wife:" because she is conjoined in love to the Lord Jesus as the only God. No other church is, or ever was, so conjoined, and therefore no other church is, or ever was, called "the Bride and wife of the Lamb."

This idea of God, which is the true and final idea, the idea entertained in heaven, and cherished by the angels, had to be introduced to men gradually. The Incarnation of Jehovah, His appearance in the world by the assumption of humanity, His work of redemption in it, His glorification of that humanity, not only as to its mental part, but also as to its bodily form, His ascension in it into heaven, and above all the heavens, thus taking it into the most plenary conjunction with Himself, filling it with His own Supreme, Divine life, as the soul of a man fills and animates his body, — all this, we say, was an event developed in time, and had

to occur historically. Therefore it has taken time for men to apprehend it clearly, — to learn it thoroughly, and understand it rightly. But the process has always been going on from the first. Jehovah declared constantly in the prophets that there was no Saviour and no Redeemer but Himself; that He Himself would come to save and redeem His people; and that the One so promised as coming, should be called “The everlasting Father,” and “Jehovah, our Righteousness.” When John the Baptist came, he came “to prepare the way of Jehovah,” and to make in the spiritual desert, then existing, a highway for our God.

When our Lord came, He spake to the people in parables; he veiled many important spiritual realities under a drapery of natural thought and symbol. He did not clearly disclose everything relating to His own Divine Personality. Only once during the whole of His visible ministry on earth, did He treat directly and explicitly of this subject at all; and on that occasion, in reply to the pressing inquiry of his disciples. He there distinctly declares His personal identity with the Father. The words are in the fourteenth chapter of John. “Philip saith unto Him, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” “Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known *me*, Philip? he that hath seen *me*, hath seen the *Father*; and how sayest thou, then, *show* us the Father?” “The Father is in Me:” * * * “The Father that dwelleth in *me*, He doeth the works:” * * * * “I and the Father are ONE.”

It is hardly possible for language to be more direct or distinct. His Divine part was God the Father. His outward, human part, was the Son; both natures

being contained and dwelling together in one and the same Person.

At another time He says to them, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."
* * * "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs, or parables; but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but shall show you plainly of the Father."

That time has now arrived. The parabolic teachings of Scripture are explained. The seals upon the meaning of His words are taken off, and their true spiritual idea disclosed. And as the Book of Revelation is peculiarly the Book of the New Church, — the church in which this idea of God is, and is to be known and taught, therefore the Book itself opens with a very distinct and emphatic declaration of it. The Lord Jesus appeared to John in his glorified, human form, His Divine spiritual body, and affirmed himself to be the only God: saying unto him, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord. Who is, and who was, and who is to come, — the Almighty." It is true that the apostle Paul had already been moved by the Holy Spirit to declare that, in the Lord Jesus, the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily; but these words seem, if possible, to be still more explicit, announcing, as they do, the whole divine Trinity, centering and dwelling in His single person. Saying, in effect, "I am He who *was*," from eternity, the Father Almighty; "I am he who *is*," the Son or Humanity, visible to men; and, "I am He who is to come," the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, that was promised; for I shed forth from Myself all holy and benign and regenerating influences,

and I perform all holy and benign and regenerating operations. Thus, "I am the Almighty," the one and only God, the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

And the Book closes, saying, "*I, Jesus*, have sent *mine angel* unto you to testify these things in the churches." Under the old dispensation it used to be, *I, Jehovah*, have sent mine angel unto you. But now it is Jesus that sends His angel. The Lord Jesus thus assuming the position and attributes of Jehovah.

These things have long been enveloped in parables, in the literal sense. But as soon as the Scripture is understood according to the spiritual sense, all things in the letter which *seem* to favor a different doctrine, are seen to be fallacious appearances, moving out of the way like shadows, or becoming lighted up with new meaning, like clouds illuminated with sunshine; giving forth a simple, clear, and uniform idea of God in one Person, and that Person manifested in the flesh.

Such, then, is the Second Coming of the Lord : the announcement from out the bosom of His Word, of this great truth concerning Himself, and concerning all other things contained in the spiritual sense of that Word. Can anything be more worthy of Him, more worthy of His power and glory, more scriptural, more rational, or more spiritually useful to mankind?

The relation of Swedenborg to all this great system of Heavenly truth, is simple and clear. He is only the human scribe. "The servant of the Lord Jesus Christ." The man prepared, qualified, and commissioned by the Lord to receive these truths and write them down for the use and benefit of mankind. This

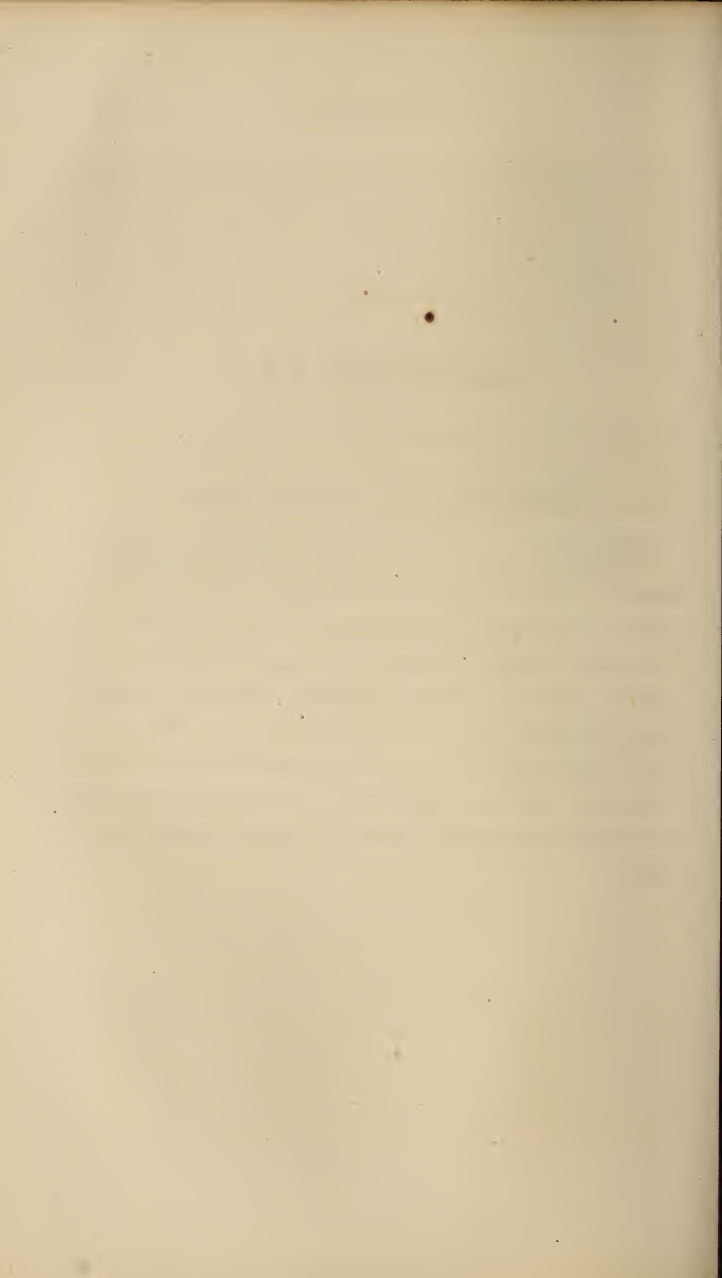
is the way divine truth has always entered the world, by means of some *man* commissioned to receive and write it. There is no other way for it to come, and so it comes in this way. We receive the truths not on his account, but on their own account; On the authority of Sacred Scripture, and in the light of their own clear rational demonstration. "In thy light shall we see light."

We may apply to Swedenborg, the words applied to John the Baptist, viz: that "he was not the Light, but was sent to bear witness of the Light." For, like John at the first coming of the Lord, he was a messenger sent before to prepare the way, to tell the nature and announce the fact of His Second Coming.

LECTURE IV.

SUMMARY OF THE WHOLE BOOK.

CONTENTS : — VIEW OF THE ENTIRE BOOK OF REVELATION ; TREATS OF THE LAST JUDGMENT, AND THE EVENTS WHICH ACCOMPANY IT ; THE JUDGMENT TAKES PLACE IN THE WORLD OF SPIRITS, INTERMEDIATE WORLD OF THE DEPARTED (*Hades*), MIDWAY BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL, SHOWN FROM SCRIPTURE, AND OCCURS, THEREFORE, OUT OF SIGHT OF MEN ; BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SUCCESSIVE SCENES OF THE JUDGMENT AND ATTENDANT EVENTS, AS DESCRIBED IN THE SUCCESSIVE CHAPTERS, FROM THE FOURTH TO THE TWENTIETH.



LECTURE.

“After this I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.” — *Revelation* iv. 1.

We have seen something of the character of the Sacred Scripture; the fulness of its inspiration, and the symbolical style of its language. The great law of correspondences has been mentioned, and a few examples given of the true Christian method of interpreting Scripture, namely: by inquiring for the proper spiritual idea meant by and involved in each natural symbol or thought.

We have seen, too, what is the nature of the Lord's second coming, and how that coming is effected; together with the new and most clear idea concerning Himself, communicated by the Lord, in and through the Word, when its spiritual meaning is understood. We are therefore, in some degree, prepared to come to the Book of Revelation and understand its contents; for this Book, in its spiritual sense, is filled with the angelic idea of the Lord, and it treats altogether of the events that are connected with His second coming.

The first three chapters, as we have seen, comprise

a general introduction, containing, among other things, a prolonged and varied injunction to the Christian churches to listen to, to search the meaning of, and to give heed to the contents of this Book. We come to-day, therefore, to the commencement of the great prophetic vision itself, and are to give a summary view of the remainder of the Book. We prefer to present this general idea at starting, for then the hearer will be better able to accompany me as we proceed; and the different parts of the exposition will fall more easily and naturally into their respective places in his mind. We are enabled to obtain this comprehensive view in the light of the New Jerusalem, for in the spiritual sense, all things related here cluster around one single event, and are connected together in a most coherent and orderly series.

There is, therefore, great unity and simplicity in the scheme of this Book; and its whole plan may be taken in at a single glance the moment its central idea is mastered and retained. The principal event described in it, is the Last Judgment; that "great day" foretold in so much Divine prophecy, and here, for the last time, fully and circumstantially set forth. Other very important events are of course incidentally mentioned, some of them quite fully delineated; but they are all clustered about this one as accessories, either as antecedents, or as accompaniments, or as consequences flowing from it.

The second coming of the Lord is antecedent to the Judgment, and is the cause of it. While the other events connected with it are the consummation or winding up of the first Christian Age or Dispensation, erroneously translated in our version of the Scripture,

“the end of the world ;” followed by the formation of a new heaven, and the descent and establishment of the New Jerusalem on the earth.

All these events will challenge their share of our attention as our exposition proceeds ; but as (in the contents of this Book), the Last Judgment is central, that is what will chiefly occupy our attention to-day. This is the key of the entire movement, rendering intelligible the succession of the various parts, and helping us to understand their connection and mutual relations.

The beginning of this fourth chapter commences the real movement of the Book, and we invite special attention to its opening words, that we may observe the stand-point from which they speak, and prepare our intelligence to understand them. “After this I looked and behold a door opened in heaven ; and the first voice which I heard (as it were of a trumpet talking with me), said, come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.” John was already *in the spirit*, already under divine influence, already in open vision, with his spiritual eyes and ears cognizant of the scenes and persons of the spiritual world ; and yet, as a condition of seeing these following things, and beholding that stupendous series of holy symbols about to be unrolled, — he must go up higher. He must, as to his mind, be lifted up still further ; must be elevated in spirit yet closer to heaven, to the angels, and to the Lord himself.

Now this circumstance is highly instructive, and forcibly suggests to the student of the Apocalypse that

he has something to do as a personal preparative in coming to its pages. If we would enjoy a clear and abiding perception of the meaning of these wonders, we must allow ourselves to pass through *something* not altogether unlike that experienced by the apostle. That is, there must be *some* lifting up of soul, an elevation of mind towards such high subjects, by an acknowledgment of the Lord and His truth, and of the reality of spiritual and heavenly things, with a desire to know them.

The door opened in heaven, was a still further and fuller opening of John's spiritual sight and hearing, that he might go (as to his spirit), more distinctly into heaven, being for the time associated mentally with angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, in their own world, that he might see something of that world and of the glorious things going to take place there ; that, under the auspices of the Lord, he might afterwards write them in a book for the perpetual instruction and enlightenment of men.

It is of the utmost importance that we attend to these first great facts of the Book ; that we look them squarely and steadily in the face, and let them make their due and full impression upon us.

Where was it, then, that John saw this stupendous array of gorgeous symbolism ? Where did that succession of mighty events which he beheld, occur ? Where happened the sealing of the twelve tribes, the one hundred and forty-four thousand, where appeared the vast multitude which no man could number, with white robes, and palms in their hands ? Where was it that the great white throne was set, and the heavenly host seen, the angels, following the Rider on the

White Horse? Where was it that the war was waged between Michael and his angels — on one hand — and the Dragon and his angels on the other?

Was it on earth, or in heaven? Was it in the visible world of men, or in the other world, commonly invisible to men, in which angels and spirits, both good and evil, clean and unclean, live? Clearly, there can be but one answer to these questions. They were not seen in the world of men; such scenes are never witnessed on earth; the events here related are not of a nature to happen in the physical world, or among men in mortal bodies. They belong to the other life, to the immortal state of existence. They are such as occur only after men have left their mortal bodies, and gone into the other world. And no statements can be plainer or clearer than those constantly made in this Book, that that is where they did and do take place. The Apostle was shown things that were to be hereafter. And where was he shown them? Why, plainly, partly in the heaven of angels, partly in the heaven of good spirits, partly in the intermediate state of souls, — in *Hades*, — the world of spirits midway between heaven and hell; while, too, some few openings are made, and some few glimpses given, of those lower regions in which the evil dwell, and into which the wicked and ungodly are cast down. *There*, then, is where the *fulfilment* of all these things takes place; for, as we have said, these events are all of such a nature as to pertain to the inhabitants of the spiritual world alone, and not to the inhabitants of the natural world. Take up the Book for yourselves, and follow it from chapter to chapter, and you will see that from the moment John was taken up, and the movement of

the prophecy begins, — through the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters, and so on to the twentieth chapter, — all that is told or foreshadowed is something to come to pass among departed spirits in the other world. The vision descends to the earth only at the close, in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters. *There*, in those last two chapters, is described what is to come in the world of men, in consequence of these great changes, and of these grand events in heaven and the world of spirits. The descent of the New Jerusalem, — the establishment of a latter-day church bearing this name, unfolding the heavenly meaning of the Bible, testifying these things, understanding these things, teaching these things, and pointing men to the rational evidences of the Lord's second coming, is the principal visible demonstration that will be seen among men.

It is one of those strange things which do sometimes occur in the history of human opinion, that, in the popular interpretation, the general plan of this Holy Book has been for the most part turned exactly upside down. While those events which are described in it as occurring in the spiritual world are made to apply to affairs in this world, — to the movements of states or empires, the last two chapters, — the very portion which does in reality relate to this world, — are made to refer to heaven; and the New Jerusalem is thought to describe the heavenly state of existence. And this, too, directly in the face of the scriptural affirmation that the holy city is something which *comes down from God out of heaven*, descending to earth, and taking up its permanent dwelling-place among men!

The New Jerusalem is said to come down from God

out of heaven, for clear and obvious reasons : because the principles upon which it is founded, the doctrines which constitute it, are truths revealed from God out of heaven, through His word, for the establishment of this church, and for the use and enlightenment of men, while the influences which aid in its reception and establishment among men, flow down from heaven.

From these brief explanations, something, we trust, may be learned towards understanding the prophecies of this Book. It is useless to follow the mode of interpretation too commonly adopted, of searching for their fulfilment in the outward world, in the events of the Roman Empire in its last days, in the developments of secular history in subsequent ages, in the movements of great leaders and nations in our own day ; nor yet in great changes and overturns to come in the solid ground or physical elements above and around us ; this is the old Jewish method continued, and must be abandoned. We must remember the words of our Lord, that His " kingdom is not of this world," and His prophecies, in their interior and real meaning, do not relate to civil governments and political affairs, but to heavenly things, to affairs in the spiritual world, and to things affecting the life of the church with men. We must change our whole point of view, therefore, and look upon the movement as going forward in the spiritual world.

In our ordinary moods, and in our common habits of thought, we are accustomed to treat the spiritual world and its inhabitants altogether with too much neglect. We leave them too much out of our account. In this respect we are not unlike the Chinese with

regard to the rest of the world. They, you know, regard themselves as the "central people," dwelling in "the middle kingdom" of the earth, believing that all beyond their "inner flowery land" consists of fragmentary strips of territory, inhabited by barbarians, ignorant and few. And so *we* live on in too narrow and bigoted a frame respecting the other parts of God's great universe; deeming this little world of ours to be about all there is, and as containing about everything worth knowing; forgetting that the Lord hath "other sheep which are not of this fold," leaving out of view the vast populations inhabiting other portions of the Divine domain. Two hundred generations of men have already lived on this earth, and after having had their day here have emigrated hence into the spiritual world. A number at least two hundred times the average population of our globe must therefore be now living there, gone from this earth alone. And were we to extend our view to those who may have gone thither from *other planets*, the mind is overwhelmed by the countless myriads which come into the thought. But allowing only for those who have gone from this world, is it not natural that the Apostle, to whom portions of them were shown in holy vision, should speak of them as "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people and tongues?"

The Chinaman, you say, must enlarge his geography, taking in the other populations. And so must we. We may no longer ignore these mighty multitudes inhabiting the various regions of the spiritual world. They are no dreamy shapes nor formless phantoms, let us forever dismiss all such vagaries

from our minds, but substantial, living men and women, in spiritual bodies, imperishable and immortal. They are more fully endowed with all the capacities and faculties of life than they were here, — better able to think and to will, better able to speak and to act. And do you suppose that such vast concourses of active human beings are without a history? Do you imagine that the teeming and mighty populations of those spiritual worlds live on there from age to age, motionless and still, their communities in a state of stagnation, with no events happening to break the monotony, and no changes in the states of their society? If so, you are mistaken. Alteration and change are ineffaceably written on the human constitution, and, where the Divine laws are obeyed, *progress* is the order of human development, in the natural world and in the spiritual world. And those populations *have* a history, and have events transpiring among them, — sometimes of immense magnitude, — more interesting, more important, and more valuable to know than any taking place in the movements of armies, or states, or empires, on our habitable globe.

Now the Lord has caused accounts of many of these events to be written in His Word, in which some of them are very fully described, while others are less minutely set forth. They are given for our instruction, and for counsels of practical wisdom, taking us, as it were, behind the scenes, developing to us the laws of mental life in actual operation, and showing us the issues to which they lead in the spiritual and eternal world. These disclosures, therefore, in the Book of Revelation, speak with peculiar emphasis to every rational and immortal soul. “He that hath an

ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand."

The time is now. If we would understand God's truth as it is, and the facts of the universe as they are, we must admit these things into our thought, and treat those great communities of the other world, their movements and their doings, as substantial realities.

Let us remember, then, that the Last Judgment is an event which takes place in the world of the departed, — the world of spirits, and not in the world of men.

Paul says, "It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that the judgment." Thus we see that the judgment comes in that other world into which men go after the death of the outward body. But, as many, perhaps most persons, reading Scripture by the obscure light of the letter, are at this day still expecting a judgment, and a Great Day to come, which shall break up the current of the world's history, which shall be a great visible demonstration here in the natural world and in the sight of men, — it may be worth while to read these words of the apostle again, noting their full meaning. He says, "It is appointed unto *all* men once to die, and *after that* the judgment." How can any, then, witness such an event until after death? How will it *ever* be possible for the world of men to *see* any such event? Clearly, the entire scene, occurring, as it does, in the other world, is one which passes by without the knowledge of men in this world. We in this world can see nothing of it, can

hear nothing of it, can be sensible of nothing of it, except as it may be reported to us by revelation. The more we examine the Sacred Scripture, and the more we reflect attentively upon the circumstances of the case, the more clearly shall we perceive that this is so. Every fact we know, and every part of Scripture confirms it.

Take, for instance, our Lord's parable of the tares and the wheat. The meaning of tares and wheat is similar to that of goats and sheep; they typify two classes of men, one of which the Lord cannot approve, and which therefore must be rejected at the last day; while the other class, consisting of good and honest men, can come into conjunction with the Lord, can enter His kingdom in the spiritual world, helping to increase the number in that new heaven which He forms at His coming. The leading thought of the parable is that the wheat and tares are not to be separated, that they are to remain together a long period, even many hundred years, — our Lord says, "until the harvest." And in His explanation of the parable, given to His disciples, He declares the *harvest* which He means to be the "end of the dispensation," the closing up of that great period of the Church, "the consummation of the" first great "age" of Christianity, which should be brought about by His second coming.*

The question now recurs upon the *place* where this

* We know that as it stands in our common Bible, this passage reads as though it was at the "*end of the world*" that this is to take place. But as we have before had occasion to remark, this is an *erroneous translation*; no end of the world is foretold in Scripture; the simple meaning is, the end or winding up of the dispensation, or "consummation of the age."

happens. Where is it that the wheat and tares remain mingled together until the harvest? Where is it that good men and evil men live on together, associated in each other's society, age after age, from the time our Lord was on earth till He comes again, and causes a separation by the execution of a judgment? Surely, it is not here in the natural world. Men remain here but a comparatively short period at longest. Wheat and tares both soon finish up their affairs here, and pass forward into the other world. More than fifty generations of men have succeeded each other on the stage of life since our Lord was on earth. Where *are* they? Do wheat and tares grow together in heaven? Are the evil taken up into heaven, and kept *there* until the judgment, that they may remain mingled with the good? Are the good taken down into hell, and kept *there* until the judgment, that they may remain associated with the evil? Surely, these things will not be maintained. Clearly, then, there is but one response that can be made to all these questions, and that is the answer we have already given them in this Discourse. The good and evil remain mingled together until the judgment, in the world where the judgment occurs, — there is no other part of the universe where they can do so, — and that is in the *Hades* of the New Testament, — the world of spirits, midway between heaven and hell; — the place into which all souls go immediately after the death of the mortal body.

With this one great fact, therefore, as to where the judgment occurs, clearly proved and appreciated, we can go forward, and, with attention, can understand

the movement of events in the Book of Revelation, while without it we could scarcely understand correctly a single verse.

The first thing shown the apostle in the vision is the *preparation* made by the Lord among the angels in heaven for the execution of the judgment. The perception which the angels had of its necessity, and their consequent belief that it was near at hand, their desire and aspirations to the Lord that He would come and accomplish it, their arrangement into order preparatory to it, and their songs of glorification and praise to the Lord when they perceived that He was about to do it, are all described ; and though veiled in the usual symbolism of prophecy, are still sufficiently obvious in the sense of the letter. These occupy the fourth chapter. In the fifth chapter, the *means* of judgment are set forth. That is, the instrumentality by which the coming work is to be accomplished, is described. And as all may see, those means are declared to be *sacred truths* coming forth out of the Word of God. For then is seen the Great Book, sealed with seven seals, which the Lamb is about to open by loosing the seals in which much of its meaning has hitherto been bound up. And the chapter closes with the anthem of joy and praise to the Lord, by the angels, when they knew that the Divine Book was to have its seals taken off, that its interior meaning was to be explained, and so, a multitude of new truths be disclosed from it, which should serve to increase the wisdom of the heavens, and strengthen them in goodness ; which would serve, too, to protect novitiate spirits, defending them against the wiles of the wicked ; should disperse the fallacies current in

the world of spirits, performing a judgment there, separating the good from among the evil, and shining down at last for the illustration and enlightenment of men in the world.

Such are the contents of these two chapters. The movement then proceeds.

As we have said, judgment is effected by means of truths drawn from Sacred Scripture; but truths of a more interior and searching kind than those which men commonly draw from the mere letter of the Word. It is the spiritual sense and application of the Divine precepts that accomplishes this work, — the truth applied to the thoughts and intents of the heart. Our Lord says, “the words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” And again He says, “I judge no man; the *word that I have spoken, this* shall judge him in the last day.” From which it appears that it is the truth alone which performs this operation. The Lord says that *He* judges no man. That is, He does not literally and personally sit in judgment, seated on a throne, surrounded by great pomp, and acting out visibly the sovereignty of a judge. All such representations found in the letter of prophecy, are meant to symbolize the great power and majesty of Divine truth, coming from the Lord, and its effectiveness in accomplishing the judgment of souls in the spiritual world.

When we come to think carefully, and analyze the subject of spiritual judgment in the light of Sacred Scripture, we shall discover that it consists of four things, occurring successively, namely; 1. Exploration of state; 2. Declaration of quality; 3. Actual trial by truth; 4. Execution of verdict.

Let us consider these different stages.

First, the exploration of state. When a community in the world of spirits is to be judged, the first thing done is, light is let in from heaven upon that community, — the light of Divine and heavenly truth. And in that light the angels can see the moral quality of that community. It discloses their state as to religious or irreligious life. It enables the angels to see and determine the general character of such a community, and the different classes of men which compose it ; enables them to distinguish the *wheat* from the *tares*, the *sheep* from the *goats*. This it is important for the angels to see, for the angels, you know, are the Lord's ministers in the performance of judgment.

Secondly, the declaration of quality. This immediately follows the discovery. When it is clearly seen among the angels, by examination from above, what is the character of a community about to be judged, a declaration is made concerning it as it appears to them in the light of heaven. And the Lord has caused those declarations to be recorded in His Word, for the spiritual instruction of men.

Thirdly, the trial by Truth. The truth itself is then carried down to that community, to see how they will receive and treat it. The angels descend to them with the truth, making it known among them, — declaring it, teaching it. Thus they are tried by it. It is brought immediately home to them, practically and clearly, and they must, and will, either receive or reject it. If they are in interior goodness, they love it and are delighted with it ; and, joining themselves to the angels, are led forth out of that community as Lot and his family were led forth by the angels out of

Sodom. Those, on the contrary, who are not in interior goodness, but rather in evil at heart, do not love such truth ; it does not delight them ; they see no form or comeliness in it that they should desire it, so they turn away and reject it, despising it in heart, and despising, likewise, those who teach and those who receive it.

Thus is that community judged ; the truth itself being the instrument by which it is effected, the Lord endowing that truth with power and might, the angels acting as its agents, and the spirits themselves acting in freedom, making their own choices, being, in one sense, their own judges, by being judged out of their own mouths ; thus fulfilling the Scripture which saith, " For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Fourthly, the execution of the Verdict. After this trial by truth has been accomplished, and the good, in consequence, separated from among the evil, then come the final results to the two separated companies. The good follow the angels, and are taken up and instructed, and become inmates of heaven. While the evil turn away, seeking their like and casting themselves down from the presence of the angels, are covered up in their own abodes in the lower regions of the spiritual world ; as Sodom and Gomorrah went to destruction by their own wickedness, as soon as all the good people (those willing to be saved) had been gathered out of them.

Now these four things are what are described in the succeeding chapters of this Book, from the sixth to the twentieth, inclusive, as happening to different

communities of spirits from this earth, congregated in the world of spirits, midway between heaven and hell.

In the sixth chapter, the exploration begins where the apostle says, "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard, as it were, the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, 'Come and see.' " Here the disclosure of new truth is symbolized, and then, what appeared in the light of that truth is described. Thus the exploration proceeds. In this sixth chapter is given a summary view of the spiritual state of the Christian populations in the world of spirits; that is, of those multitudes who had gone in thither from Christendom, and been detained there since the first coming of the Lord until His second coming. And the chapter closes with a declaration that the judgment itself is immediately at hand; saying, "For the great day of his wrath has come; and who shall be able to stand?"

In the next chapter (seventh), under the representation of the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand of the twelve tribes, and the great white-robed band beyond, we have the fact set forth that in those vast populations which are about to be judged, there will be found immense multitudes whom the truth can approve, and who, therefore, can be taken up into association with angels; and so go to swell the numbers of those "new heavens," or new heavenly communities which the Lord is about to form.

The four succeeding chapters, from the eighth to the eleventh, inclusive, are occupied with the exploration, the declaration of qualities disclosed among the

protestant, or nominally protestant, populations there, and their experimental trial by some leading truths of the Divine Word. The reason why the reformed or protestant body is described first, is because among them the Sacred Scripture is freely given to the common people, a knowledge of its literal sense is most widely diffused, and they are accustomed to appeal to its teachings as the standard of faith and practice. They have the most light and the most of the genuine elements of the church among them, and therefore are the first recipients of new divine truth. For we read in the prophet that when the judgment comes, it shall "*begin at my sanctuary, saith the Lord.*"

In the twelfth chapter, under the figure of the woman clothed with the sun, is described the New Church, the church of the New Jerusalem, as to the fulness of *light*, in which it is, from the Word of God, and as to the strength and purity of her doctrines. She was seen surrounded by the sun, moon, and stars, all the light-giving heavenly bodies, to denote the completeness of the knowledge she will enjoy, of heavenly truths and heavenly things. This church is described here, midway of the scene, while the judgment is going on, because its truths were then promulgated in the world of spirits, and it is the church established there as that world becomes cleared of the evil. Afterwards flowing down into the opinions of men, and so becoming a church in this world.

The thirteenth chapter, under the emblem of the beast with seven heads and ten horns, describes the besetting sin of the protestant world, — the dominant evil to which it is most readily prone. More details will be given about it when we come to treat of that chapter.

In the fourteenth chapter, where the apostle says, "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads," is described the new heaven which the Lord promised He would form at His second coming, and which is composed of the good found among the judged populations.

The fifteenth and sixteenth chapters are occupied with the execution of the verdict on the evil found in the protestant populations; symbolized by the great red dragon, and his being cast down with his associate spirits, into the pit. A more particular explanation will be found in the eighth lecture.

The seventeenth and eighteenth chapters, under the figure of the woman on the scarlet beast, describe the exploration and judgment of the papists or Roman Catholic spirits. In this view, we believe nearly all protestant writers have been agreed. The only mistake they have made being the supposition that the prophecy meant the visible church of Rome in this world. Whereas, as we have seen, in its real meaning the prophecy refers to that larger and vaster concourse of papists, and that far more numerous and formidable church of Rome, congregated in the world of spirits at the time of the Last Judgment.

The nineteenth chapter, under the symbol of the white horse and his rider, describes certain particulars connected with the manner or mode of the Lord's second advent, with the closing up of the former dispensation, and the introduction of the new one, while the twentieth chapter, as may obviously appear on a perusal of it, is occupied with the closing scenes of

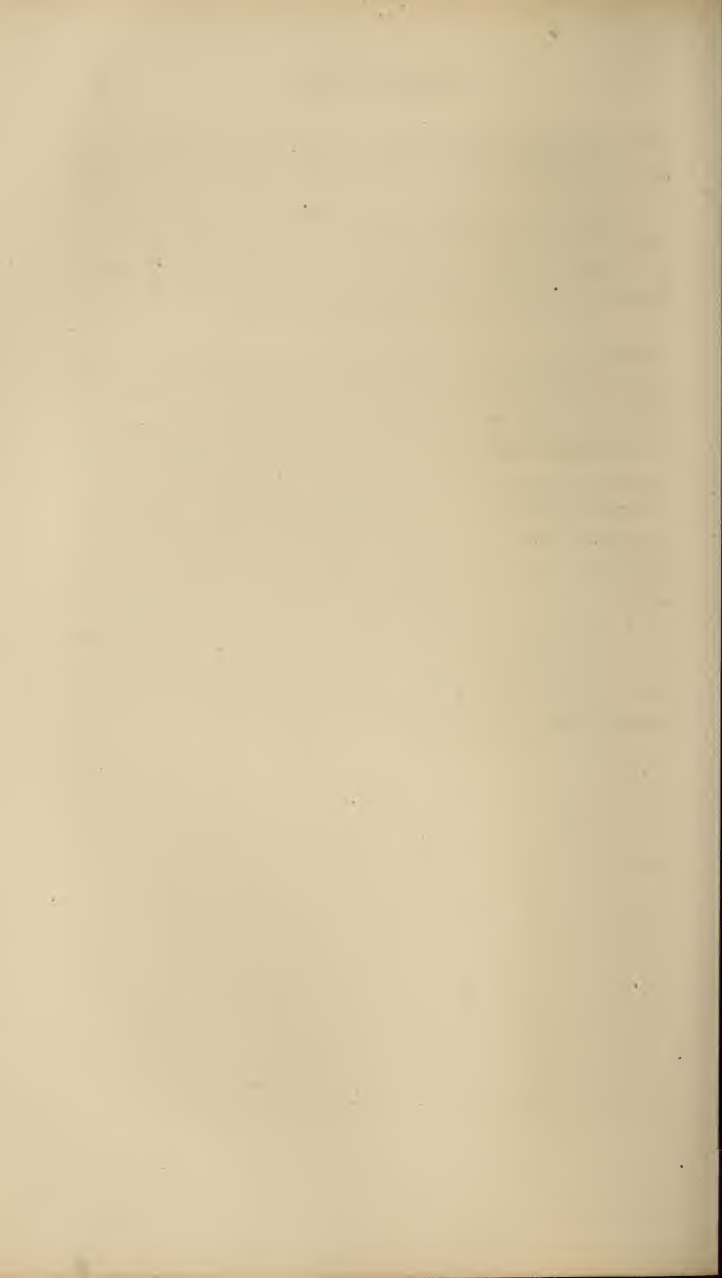
the judgment, and its execution upon Gentile spirits from the nations outside of and beyond the Christian world.

Then, finally, we have, in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters, as the result of this great judgment, and of all the other grand events connected with it, the descent of the New Jerusalem to the earth, the promulgation of all these truths here among men, and the establishment of a new church founded upon them, teaching them and explaining them, and through them leading men into more perfect obedience to the precepts of the gospel.

Thus we see that the moment we have the right stand-point given us, from which to view the scenes of this Book, its keynote is struck. Its general movement from first to last is easily understood. All then becomes order and harmony. The several succeeding events readily fall into their respective places, and the mind clearly apprehends the rational connection of the different parts. There is a simple and orderly chain of development from beginning to end, and any one portion rightly examined and understood, throws a rational and clear light over every other portion. That which commenced in the world of spirits more than a hundred years ago, continues there to-day. The population of the globe has so increased in these later ages that 100,000 departing spirits pass into that world now every twenty-four hours ; a full regiment every fifteen minutes ; nearly a million a week. And this great concourse, pressing forward into the strong and clear light of Divine truth, still shining down there from heaven, and into the presence of angels, makes every day a day of judg-

ment now ; for the flocking multitudes do not remain and accumulate there as formerly, (the causes which commenced the judgment serving to keep it in progress,) but being soon explored and separated, pass on in a shorter time, the good to their elevated destinations, the evil to their own places below.

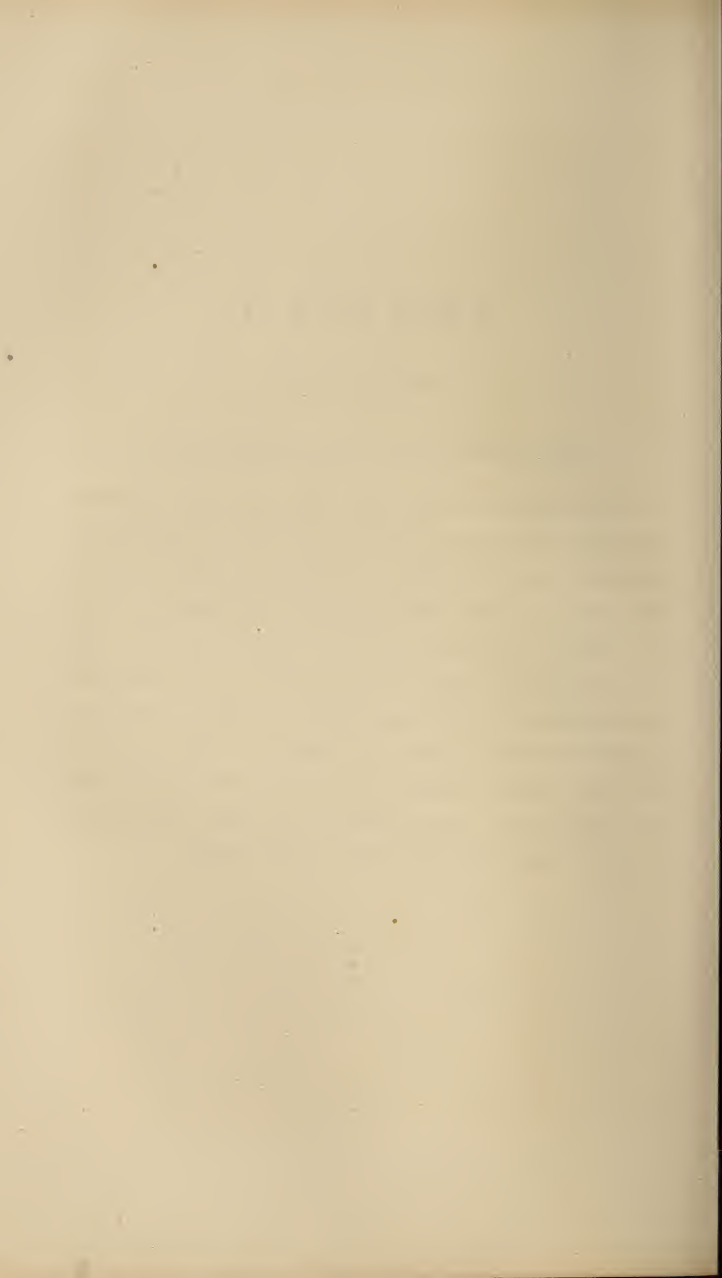
The study of these parts in detail, which will be our next endeavor, will not be without its practical instruction to us ; for the judgment here described is, as to its essential laws and principles, the judgment we ourselves must all pass through. And we can here, therefore, study the evil qualities and false principles it is necessary to avoid and shun in order to be approved in that day of trial, and be able to stand ; and we can renew our covenant with the truth, imploring the Lord for His help to render us faithful to the discharge of its duties, and to inspire into our hearts a sincere and abiding love for His salvation and for heavenly and holy things.



LECTURE V.

THE OPENING OF THE SEALED BOOK.

CONTENTS:—THE 5TH, 6TH, AND 7TH CHAPTERS TREATED; PREPARATION MADE IN HEAVEN FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE JUDGMENT; OPENING OF THE INTERNAL MEANING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, IN THE LIGHT OF WHICH SUCCESSIVE EXPLORATION IS MADE BY THE ANGELS OF THE STATES OF POPULATIONS OF SPIRITS TO BE JUDGED, SIGNIFIED BY THE HORSES GOING FORTH FROM THE BOOK; THE SEALING OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND, SIGNIFYING THE RECOGNITION OF THE GOOD, WHO ARE CAPABLE OF BEING SAVED, AND CAPABLE OF BECOMING INHABITANTS OF THE “NEW HEAVENS” ABOUT TO BE FORMED.



LECTURE.

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard, as it were, the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts, saying, Come and see.” — *Rev.* vi. 1.

“Come and see!” The invitation is to us to-day as well as to John then, — to turn and look; to open the eyes of our minds and examine, inquiring into the meaning of these things, and reaping the practical instruction in heavenly and divine truths they are capable of affording.

We treat to-day of the *fifth*, *sixth*, and *seventh* chapters of Revelation.

As mentioned last Sunday, the *fifth* chapter is occupied in describing the *means* of exploration and judgment, — the *medium* or instrumentality which the Lord employs to accomplish that work. And, as then said, and as may be clearly seen from the contents of the chapter, those means are declared to be *sacred truths* drawn or sent forth from His Word. The Book sealed with seven seals is the Bible. And in the first verse of the chapter it is said that this Book is “*written within*” as well as on the outside, to signify that the Bible contains an interior, spiritual sense, or meaning, *within* the external or literal sense. And the Book was said to be sealed up, because this interior sense or meaning of Sacred Scripture has not been known

until this age, when the Lord has revealed it, allowing it now to be made known and taught. When a roll of parchment is sealed up, then only that writing, which is on its outside, usually containing some general description of the contents within, can be seen or read. That which is *within* is entirely invisible, and cannot be read until the seals are removed and the parchment unrolled. Its interior contents can then be read and understood, like the rest. And so it has been with the Word of God. Its *outside*, — its letter, — is what Christendom has been reading for sixteen or seventeen centuries. That which is written *within*, — its spiritual meaning, — has not been seen, nor recognized, nor read, because it has been covered and concealed by the seals of natural idea — natural symbol and thought — contained in the letter. The seals are taken off, and the Book opened, when the symbols are explained, and when each spiritual idea meant and denoted by each natural idea, is disclosed and rendered clear. Men then begin to read the spiritual sense. The seals are said to be *seven*, not from any *numerical* force to be attached to that prophetic word, but because seven is a symbolical number, denoting *all*, or the whole of anything that is treated of, especially sacred things. Hence the number seven occurs so constantly in this Book, not unfrequently being used many times in a single chapter.

This spiritual sense of Scripture, together with many of the leading truths it contains, and the means of learning and elucidating it from the Bible, was, as we have already stated and maintained, revealed and disseminated in the world among men about the middle of the last century, in the Writings of Emanuel Swe-

denborg. At the same time, and by processes suited to that world, these truths and doctrines were promulgated and diffused among spirits in the spiritual world, and, as before said, became there, in the hands of the angels, the means or instrumentality of exploration and judgment. The leading idea, then, of this fifth chapter is, that the Lord Jesus Christ, at His coming, reveals the spiritual meaning of His Word, and that by and according to the truths written in it, He executes the judgment.

The latter part of the chapter is filled with the happy anthems and joyous glorifications of the angels on the revelation of these truths from the Word. They themselves were delighted with the truths ; they were such as they had greatly desired to know more distinctly and fully ; and they saw the immense uses they would perform, — how, by means of them, the simple good in the world of spirits would be rescued from among the evil, — how, by them, the wicked crew in the intermediate world would soon be dispersed and cast down, — and how, too, the church on earth would be enlightened and strengthened, would be edified and purified by them, thus diffusing the highest and most lasting benefits among mankind, — their souls overflowing with gladness at all this, they broke forth into these songs of thanksgiving and praise.

It is easy to examine the next two chapters, the sixth and seventh, in connection, for they are united and pervaded by a common idea ; being occupied with a general exploration of the populations from Christendom, then about to be judged, and a Declaration of the state in which the Lord and His angels then

discovered them to be, viewing them as they did in the light of heaven and of these new truths ; a double declaration, describing both the evil and the good.

The first words of the Apostle at the beginning of the sixth chapter and as quoted in the text are, — “ And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals.” The idea that the opening of these seals denotes an exploration by the Lord of the spiritual state of His church and of the Christian world — in the light of Divine truth as that is disclosed from His Word — is not new in interpretation. The symbolism is so apt and pertinent as to suggest readily a good deal of its meaning to the careful and spiritually-minded student of the Bible. And it has been common in the past ages of the church for the most accomplished commentators to attribute to this chapter some meaning like this. Their point of failure is, in applying it to visible Christendom, and the church among men, to the neglect as we have seen of those vaster populations congregated in the world of spirits. Some have supposed it to be a brief spiritual history of the Christian church from the apostolic age till the second Advent of the Lord ; others, that it describes the spiritual state of the church and the world as He finds them *at* His second coming.

But to get at the core of its meaning, and have every symbol fall into its right place, we must follow the apostle into the spiritual world, and view these declarations as applying, specifically, to the communities in the world of spirits, accumulated there from Christendom, just before the Last Judgment. It may be said, indeed, not untruly, to contain an epitome of the spiritual history of the church from the beginning,

for the generations of men who had lived here and composed that church in the centuries gone, were then and there assembled. And, so too, its descriptions may be truly said to be, in some good degree, typical of the spiritual state of visible Christendom at the Lord's coming, for thousands, yes, millions, who had just departed from Christendom, were there, carrying all their qualities and principles of life with them. What, therefore, was true of those communities of spirits, at the middle of the last century, would also be measurably true of nominally Christian Europe in the same age, and may to-day be said to be true of it and of us, except so far as certain qualities or characteristics may have undergone modification or change in the lapse and progress of the last hundred years.

Let us now attend to the exploration of that vast multitude of spirits as it is described in the sixth chapter. It is not difficult to perceive that the opening of the different seals, one after another, denotes the disclosure of successive truths from the Word, or of successive instalments of the truth, and, that in the light of each one of these successive truths, some new fact was disclosed, — some new spiritual quality existing in that community, was laid open to view. Such is indeed the meaning. And it is a thought which falls so readily into the apprehension from the record that we have no need to prove it.

But the signification of some of the specific symbols is not at first so obvious. The meaning of the four horses seen in connection with the opening of the first four seals, will not so readily appear. And we shall not have the space to give all the Scriptural and rational considerations which would make their pecul-

iar signification, perhaps, entirely clear ; but we shall have time for a few statements which will put the inquiring mind on the right track, after which it can work out the remainder of the confirmation for itself.

All the members of the animal creation are correspondences and representatives of things in man : that is, of qualities or characteristics or principles which are alive and active in his mind, and by which, therefore, he is animated. And in the Bible these animals are employed as types or emblems of those mental traits or qualities. Thus, our Lord calls Herod a *fox*, to denote his wicked cunning ; Issachar is called a *strong ass* ; Dan, a *serpent* in the way ; Naphtali is described as a *hind let loose* ; each one expressive of some distinctive mental characteristic. Our Lord is called a *Lamb*, to set forth His quality of Divine innocence. He is also called the *Lion* of the tribe of Judah, to symbolize the great spiritual strength, or power over evil, which He possesses by virtue of the union of Divine Goodness with Divine Truth in His human nature. This employment of animals might be indefinitely confirmed, as will readily be seen from every portion of the Scriptures, — from the ritual ceremonies of the Jews, in which certain domestic animals were offered to Jehovah, — in the histories of Old Testament and New, and in the prophetic parts of both.

What, therefore, is true of other animals, is true also of *horses* ; they are frequently used for prophetic purposes, and, like other animals, are emblematic and significative of a certain element in man. And that element is his faculty of understanding the Divine Word, — that power of rational thought by which he

perceives and appreciates spiritual truth. From this explanation of their meaning we shall get a clear and consistent idea from every passage of Scripture in which horses are mentioned. We shall see something of what is meant by the horses and chariots of salvation, so frequently mentioned in the Old Testament; by the *horses* and chariots of *fire*, which the prophet's boy, whose "eyes" had been "opened," saw round about Elisha, similar to those by which Elijah had been taken up into heaven. This is the reason why the Lord was seen, at His second coming, in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation, riding upon a white *horse*, of great brilliancy and pureness, because, as already explained, He now comes to enlighten the rational faculty of men in relation to spiritual subjects, — comes to communicate to them a higher meaning and better understanding of His Word.

That there is some hidden and deep-laid analogy between the bodily act of *riding* and the mental act of exercising rational thought, may be gleaned from many things in the common language of men. When a man confines his thoughts principally to one channel, keeping it running, too much, as men think, upon a single idea, we say that he is *riding a hobby*. If he thinks too loosely, or vaguely, diffusing his thought over too wide a surface, we say that he *gives the reins* to his imagination. In the Greek and Roman mythology, the winged *horse* Pegasus was the emblem of discursive or poetic thought; — an idea descended from the correspondential symbolism of an earlier time. Thus, in the prophet, where a darkened state of the church is foretold, in which there should be no adequate understanding of the real sense of Sacred

Scripture, nor any clear perception of spiritual truth, — it is said, “In that day, I will smite every *horse* with astonishment, and his rider with madness ; — and will smite every *horse* of the people with blindness.” While in another place, where a different and better state of the church is described, we read, — “In that day, there shall be upon *the bells of the horses*, ‘Holiness unto the Lord.’” Then there is also the vision of Zechariah, in which four *horses* of different colors were seen by the prophet to come out from between two mountains of brass. And in one place where the restoration of the church to a faithful and happy state is predicted, one of the promises is, — “And Jehovah will make Judah as a goodly *horse*.” That the four horses mentioned here, mean something connected with the understanding of Scripture, may be seen on reflection, from the circumstance that they *went forth out of the Book*. And what can go forth out of the great and holy Book but something relating to rational thought, or the understanding of truth? How can we apprehend what is in a *Book*, but through the understanding?

So, did time allow, we might multiply indefinitely the Scriptural and rational confirmations of the spiritual meaning of horses and of riding.

But with what has already been adduced we shall be prepared to see that, under the symbolism of the *four horses*, there is described an exploration of that multitude *as to their understanding of the Word of God*. This is the first question to be asked concerning any people. What degree of light are they in? How do they understand the truth? What do they know about spiritual and heavenly things? As our Lord

said to the lawyer who came to Him with questions, "Which is the great commandment of the law, How readest thou?" How *readest* thou? How do you *understand* that which has been *written in the Book*? And this is the first question which Heaven and the angels ask of a society of spirits about to be judged. "*How readest thou?*" How have you understood and applied the things written, for universal instruction, in the Word of God? What is your knowledge of and your intelligence in heavenly and Divine things? And what are your states of life accordingly?

The declarations here made as to what was seen as the successive seals were opened, are inspired infallible answers to these questions.

When the first seal was opened, we read, "And I saw, and behold, a *white horse*; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer."

This is readily seen to be descriptive of the *good* found in that community. For, when the exploration began, the first thing seen by the angels was the multitude of righteous it contained; sincere readers and faithful doers of the Word; and the symbols mentioned in this verse are all emblematic of their state. *White*, clear, and glistening, is heaven's own color with respect to intelligence. The spiritual angels are always described as appearing in white, bright, and shining apparel. And the good spirits are seen clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

The *white horse*, therefore, clearly, is emblematic of their understanding of the Word of God; that they had read their Bible with some just appreciation of its

truths, and thence were gifted, both in faith and life, with some good degree of intelligence in spiritual things. The *bow* which the rider of this horse carried in his hand, denotes the *combat* which such persons are always ready to wage against their own bad propensities and wrong dispositions of mind. The *crown* given unto him, is the "crown of life," — a token that all such will be saved, for they are capable of following the Lord when he comes to Judgment, and capable of becoming members of the New Heaven which He then forms. This rider, being said to go forth conquering and to conquer, means their continued and successful resistance in temptations, overcoming their own evil dispositions, in the name of the Lord, and by means of His truth.

We come next to the second seal. As the light shining from the spiritual sense of the Word increased, and the exploration by the angels proceeded, other qualities and other characters were discovered, existing in that great community.

The next horse that went forth was *red*. This denotes an understanding of the Word among those who are in evil. For the color *red* is used here in an opposite or bad sense, of which there are in Scripture many instances. In which case it denotes an evil state of the heart or will. As thus, in the prophet Isaiah, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your *sins* be as *scarlet*, they shall be white as snow; though they be *red* like *crimson*, they shall be as wool." And in the seventeenth chapter of Revelation, where the unfaithful church is described, — the church filled with all manner of perversions and uncleanness, it is represented under the

figure of a woman seated upon a *scarlet-colored* beast, to show that the affections which animated it were evil. And that the state of the evil is here meant by the *red horse*, is easily seen from the words that follow; that it "was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth; and that they should kill one another." This, therefore, describes those in that community, who in their lives in the world had heard the gospel, had heard and read the Scripture, and therefore had come to some understanding of its truths; but had not applied them to life,—had not repented, nor obeyed them in heart. They were hearers, and theoretical receivers, but not doers of the Word, remaining still in the life of their selfish lusts.

Under the figure of the *black horse*, is described the *indifferent* class of persons, those who take no interest in spiritual things. Though in the world they lived in a community where the Scriptures were circulated and these things constantly taught, yet they acquired no rational knowledge of them; their understandings were totally dark, when questioned with respect to the holy truths of the Divine Word; and consequently they were entirely empty of that spiritual goodness which those truths, properly applied, would have enabled them to procure.

Having gone thus far in the exposition of these symbols, the meaning of the *fourth horse* will be readily perceived. He was without proper color, being of a deathly paleness. Pallor, indeed, denotes death. And, it is said that Death sat on him, while Hell followed with him. By this is described the *deniers* of the Word; those who mock at its divinity, and condemn its truths,—in understanding, in heart, and in

life. All such are spiritually dead ; and because they are under no restraints of conscience, they live as they please, giving a loose to every passion where outward circumstances do not forbid. Hence it is said in the description which follows, that, “ power was given unto them * * * * to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.” By which are signified evil affections, or lusts and propensities of every kind.

It will be seen, therefore, that here, under these four heads, there is a classification of the various hearers of the gospel, somewhat analogous to that made by our Lord in the Parable of the Sower ; the order, however, being reversed. For in the Parable, the Lord commences with the most wicked, ending with the good ; whereas this prophetic vision commences with the good, ending with the most wicked. They are those respectively who receive the word, — some, into good ground ; others among thorns ; others, again, into stony places, or hardness of heart ; while the last by the wayside only, rejecting it wholly.

The opening of the *fifth* seal, describes the exploration of still another class of persons, as may be discovered from what is then said, — a certain class of good spirits. “ And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held ; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ? And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto them, that

they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

These were simple-minded, good spirits, who, when they went out of this world, were not sufficiently instructed in the principles of divine truth, to be rationally clear and strong in it; and thence, not well able to meet the wiles of evil spirits, or defend themselves from them. It was, therefore, provided by the Lord that they should be reserved in the world of spirits, in a region apart by themselves, where they were protected from the infestations of the wicked, until after the judgment, when they were liberated from their circumscribed position and taken up into heaven. The place where they were retained, is the same that is referred to where it is said that our Lord went and preached to the spirits in prison, after his resurrection, who had been retained there in Hades from the days of Noah, waiting for His coming to be liberated and taken up. It is a region in the lower part of the World of spirits, here called *under the altar*, but frequently referred to in the prophets as the *lower earth* or the *lower parts of the earth*. The *earth* there meant being the *earth* of the *spiritual* world, and not the material earth of the visible world of men.

The exploration having proceeded thus far, we come next to the opening of the *sixth* seal. And at this disclosure the picture becomes sad and gloomy enough. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal; and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she

is shaken of a mighty wind." A style of description which is prolonged through the remainder of the chapter. Under this array of dark and strong symbolism, is set forth the spiritual state and general aspect of things in the world of spirits, as they appeared in the light of heaven when all the classes of good spirits were left out of view, and the evil there were examined by themselves. We have not time, of course, for a minute opening of all this symbolism ; but it is easy to see that by it is figured a total perversion of the principles of life, with everything in disorder and trembling on the brink of destruction. The withdrawal of the sun, moon, and stars, every body capable of shedding or dispensing heavenly light, indicates an entire absence of all truth, and consequently of all good, showing a prevalence there of a spiritual darkness which was only a precursor and foreshadow of that *blackness of darkness* into which they were about to be cast forever.

They were then seen to be already prepared for the next great stage, namely ; for the actual Trial by Truth. And the final act of judgment is manifestly near at hand ; consequently, we read, as the finishing words of this chapter, " For the Great Day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand ? "

Here, we have a pause. And the seventh chapter opens with an entire change of scene. We are not any longer looking, through the glass of Divine prophecy, down into those lower regions. Our oppressed senses begin to feel relief ; for we are permitted to turn our eyes and follow, for a space, the direction of those happy ones who have been rescued from all that

terrible trouble; who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;—who have not only believed and loved revealed truth, but have likewise practised it, thus having washed or purified their lives by it.

Everywhere in the prophets, where the second coming of the Lord is spoken of do we read of those *New Heavens* which the Lord will institute or form when He comes. And in this chapter we have an account of those who are capable of entering into those new Heavens, and becoming members of their societies. The Heavenly world increases constantly in population as well as the natural world, and societies there increase much more rapidly than communities here, for there they neither die any more, nor go any more out, but members once added remain to eternity. Hence the communities in heaven are continually increasing, and with immense rapidity, and, when it pleases the Lord, New Heavens are formed, by the organization and arrangement of new heavenly communities.

In the two great classes of righteous mentioned in this chapter, are included all those then found in the world of spirits capable of being saved, because willing to be, and so of being organized into communities in which the heavenly principles of life should be freely obeyed from the heart, not of compulsion but from choice. And communities of spirits, so composed and organized, constitute societies of heaven.

The one hundred and forty-four thousand said to have been sealed from the twelve tribes of Israel, represent religious men who are internally good, honest, and true. Who, therefore, belong to some of the

tribes of the Lord's spiritual Israel. For in the prophets *Israel* stands for the *church*, and the twelve tribes here meant have nothing to do with the literal descendants of the Jews. Paul says that, under the Christian Dispensation, he is not a true Jew, who is so outwardly, according to the flesh, but they only are Jews, in the prophetic sense, who are so inwardly according to the spirit, "whose circumcision is of the heart." Hence, by the one hundred and forty-four thousand are typified those various classes of the righteous who are very receptive of divine truth and goodness; enjoying therefrom a close interior conjunction of mind and heart with their Lord and Master. Such spirits constitute the superior heavens in the eternal world, and become angels. The numbers here used, as *twelve* and *one hundred and forty-four*, and *thousands*, are not employed in their arithmetical sense; they have here no numerical force. As we have already had occasion to state, all the numbers employed in the Word are symbolical, implying and describing something spiritual in connection with the subject treated of. In the historical portions of Scripture, they do indeed have a literal application for the most part, in addition to their spiritual meaning, but in the prophetic portions they have no such literal application, and are to be understood in only their spiritual or emblematic sense.

The truth that is meant to be conveyed under the representation of the "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues," will not be difficult to be understood, after all that has gone before. This is descriptive of that vast number who are in some reception of the

divine truth and goodness, but in lower degrees of it. While they have not, when in the world, opened their hearts to the Lord so as to enter into that interior conjunction with Him mentioned above, they are nevertheless conjoined to Him in the faith of obedience, and are capable of serving Him in the eternal world, because they served Him with some degree of faithfulness in this. Such do not become angels in the other life, but angelic spirits; being congregated and organized into communities which constitute what are called the "inferior heavens," in the spiritual world. According to the natural idea of the words, here used, that multitude seemed to have been gathered out of every nation, and people, and kindred, and tongue in the natural world. And this, indeed, is literally true to a considerable extent, for they came from all the nations and tongues of visible and nominal Christendom. But in the spiritual world, the national distinctions after a while disappear, and the differences of tongues vanish away; for in that world they all speak the same language,—they are of one language and one speech. In the spiritual idea, therefore, by these words are meant *spiritual* kindreds and tongues,—the different affinities of goodness and truth. The different degrees of moral attainment, of personal worthiness, and the indefinite varieties of virtuous excellence. For as one star differeth from another star in light and glory, so it is with the just after resurrection into the other life, there is every degree of light and attainments, and hence of association and happiness.

The scenes we have been contemplating are from descriptions written in the Word of God. And they

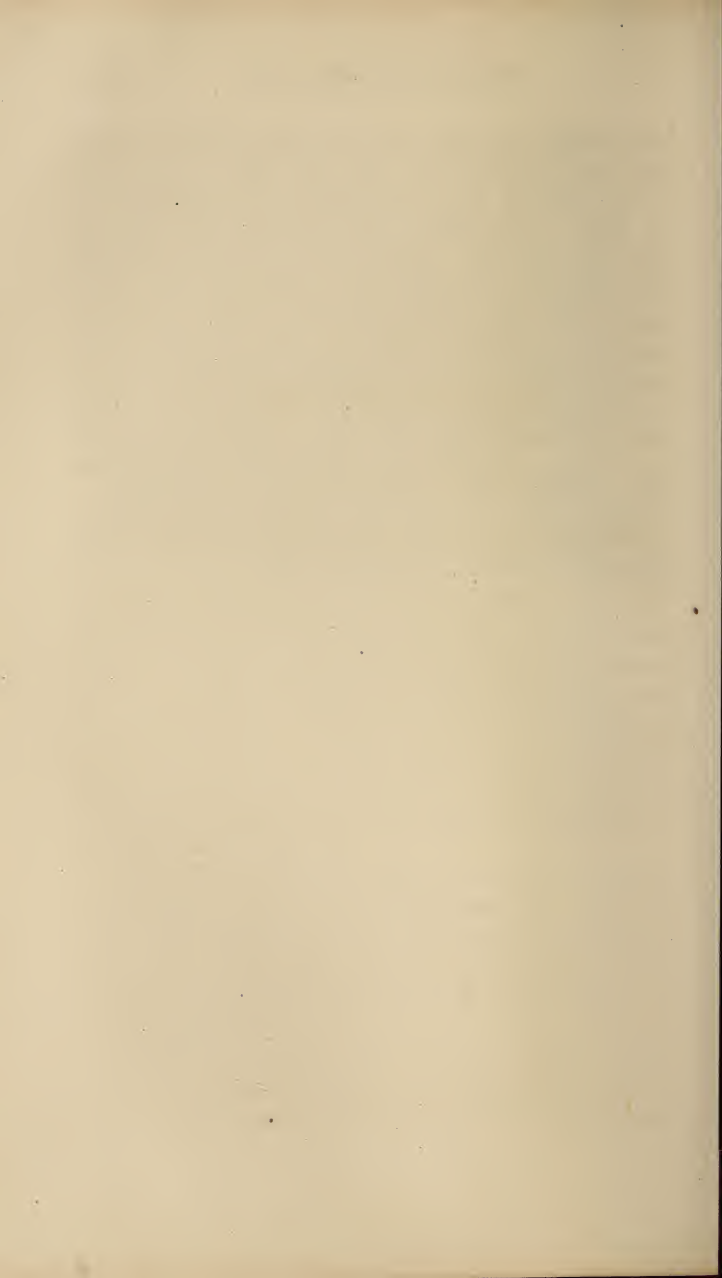
have been placed there for our permanent instruction and guidance. In their primary application they refer to certain mighty multitudes of spirits congregated in the other world about the middle of the last century. But in the principles involved in them, they are universal, reaching in their applications to all spirits and to all ages; to men in the body equally as to those who have passed out of the body, and to the generations that are here and to follow as well as to those which are past and gone. The judgment for us will be essentially the same as it was for them.

Similar will be the exploration that is made. The same questions will be asked of us that were asked of them. How have we read the Scripture? How have we understood and applied the word that has been read and preached to us? How far have we been faithful in our spiritual duties? How much knowledge of heavenly and divine things have we actually gained, and what degree of love or affection have we acquired for them? Is our love for them sufficiently rooted in practice to retain ruling possession of our minds when we shall come to be delivered up to our own interior impulses, in the unrestrained freedom of the spiritual world?

These are questions to affect profoundly every rational mind. They go directly to the heart and core of the soul, touching, with a most startling precision, the very pivot in the will, upon which swing to and fro, the unutterable destinies of an eternal life or an everlasting death.

Let us be wakeful, then, and work while the day lasts. Let us be faithful in the employment of those talents which have been entrusted to our keeping.

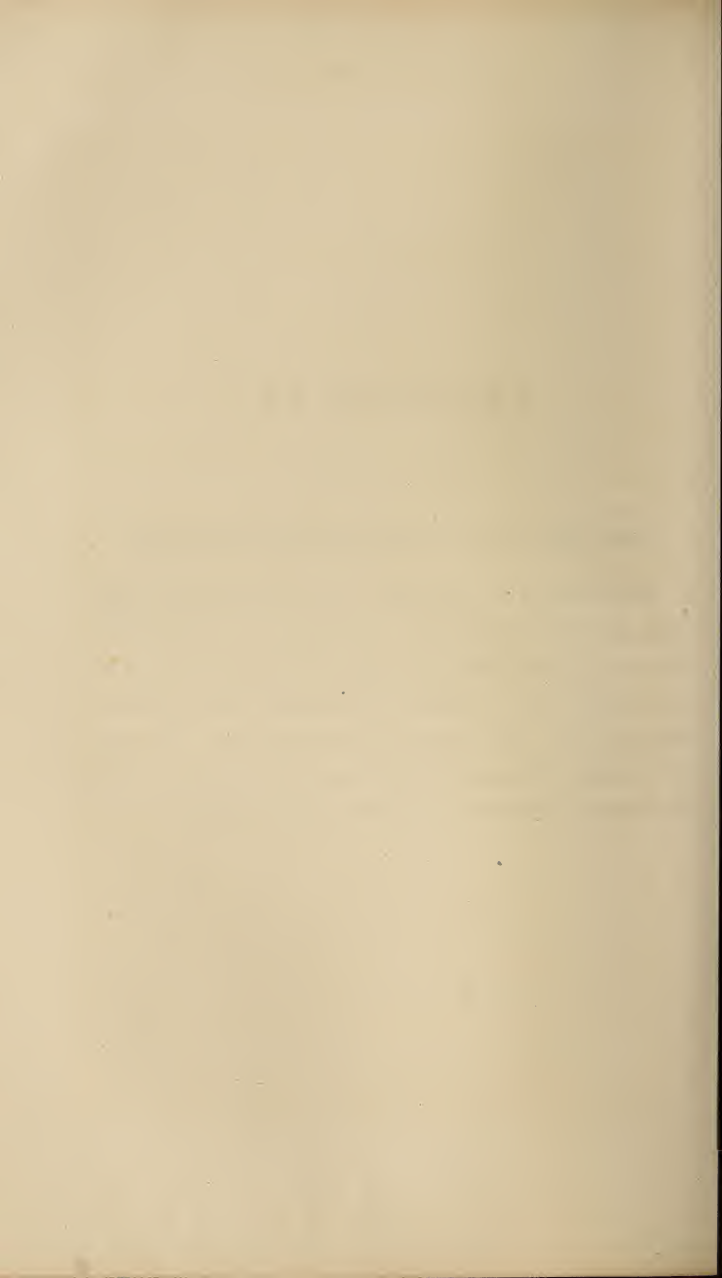
Let us strive to clothe ourselves with a wedding garment, and to enter in at the strait gate. And when we feel inclined to be weary or to sink in weakness, let us lift up our eyes to the mountains from whence doth come our help. Remembering that our help is from Jehovah, who made the heavens and the earth; and that the Great Keeper of Israel is One who never slumbers nor sleeps. That so, we may learn some portion of that new and heavenly song, sung before the throne by the one hundred and forty-four thousand, and which none but they could learn; or, at least, that we may be able to join in the response and chorus of the great multitude, saying with them, — “Salvation unto our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb,” forever and ever.



LECTURE VI.

THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS.

CONTENTS: — PROGRESS OF THE JUDGMENT; FIRE FROM THE GOLDEN CENSER, — THE TRIAL BY LOVE; THE SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPETS DENOTES THE PROCLAMATION OF THE TRUTH, AND SPECIFIC EXPLORATION OF SPIRITS BY MEANS OF IT; ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SCRIPTURE; MEANING OF THE STAR *Wormwood*; GENERAL EXPLANATION OF THE SUCCESSIVE TRUMPETS, — CHAPTERS 8TH AND 9TH.



LECTURE.

“And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

“And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.”—*Rev.* viii. 5, 6.

In our last Discourse, covering the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of this Book, we contemplated the general condition of the great congregated multitude in the intermediate world of spirits, directly preceding the Last Judgment. Those chapters contain a record of what the angels saw as existing there, when they looked down upon those mighty populations in the light of heaven; for in that light they clearly discerned the characters of the different classes living there.

In the chapters we are to examine to-day, we pass to another stage of the exploration. The text we have chosen marks an important step in the progress of this history,—opening a new scene in this great spiritual drama. In the exploration we studied before, the spirits themselves had no part. It was a heavenly reconnoissance, so to speak, an examination made by the angels from the heights of the spiritual world, of the multitudes dwelling beneath them; as *we* might stand upon Mount Washington, or some similar height

in the natural world, and view the populations living in the valleys below. The populations explored did not even know that the exploration was going on, therefore it did not affect them; it made no change in the state or condition of their communities.

But, as we have said, we now pass to a different scene. In the chapters we study to-day, the heavenly influences begin to descend, and begin to take effect in one portion of those communities. The exploration as here described begins to become specific and practical. It is carried down by angels into those communities, and there applied, in those congregations which were to be judged first. They, therefore, now are described as becoming somewhat conscious of those influences; and we begin here to see disclosed some of those results which, as the Judgment proceeds, finally end in the disruption of those communities, and the complete overthrow of the wicked.

“And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.”

We have already, in a former discourse, explained the spiritual meaning of *fire*. It is the natural element employed in Scripture to typify the flame of *love* or desire, continually rising up in the human soul, giving warmth and animation to the affections. In the connection in which it is used in the text, it stands for that pure and holy love inspired into the hearts of the righteous by the Lord, through the operations of His spirit.

The symbolism here, as will be seen, is borrowed from the legal or representative worship of the Jews.

The *altar* denotes the *worship* of the Lord. And the flame burning on the altar of burnt-offering was a perpetual emblem of that unselfish, pure, and holy love, from which the Lord ought always to be worshipped by human beings. While the incense or grateful odor rising up from the golden altar within the veil, was a figure of the agreeable manner in which true worship of the Lord, performed by men, is perceived in heaven; it affects the senses of the angels as a spiritual perfume or incense. In the Jewish worship, the priest was never allowed to light the censer of incenses from any other fire than that kindled on the altar of burnt-offering, which was originally kindled directly from heaven, by miraculous agency.

Speaking correspondentially, according to prophetic usage, — all heaven worships the Lord with *fire* taken from His holy altar. In other words, all heaven worships the Lord from that pure and holy love — towards Him, and for good and right things — which is inspired into their hearts from our Lord and Saviour in His glorified humanity.

When, therefore, it is here said that the angel filled the censer with *fire* from off the altar, and then cast it into the earth, it is meant that now the communities below are to be brought to the trial by *love*.

A communication is to be opened from heaven with them, and heavenly influences are to be carried down among them, to see how they will be affected by those influences. The angels will descend to them, bearing the truth, their hearts at the same time burning with that holy fire which burns in heaven, — animated and warmed by the zeal of a pure love for the truth and

for good and heavenly things ; and it will then be seen what is the love which animates those communities, — whether they are in similar love, whether they can stand that heavenly sphere, whether they have any such affection for the truth, or any so pure desire for heavenly and holy things.

This is indeed the great trial of the heart by the standard of holy truth. And where should we be, or where should we stand to-day, do you think, tried by a similar standard ?

[It must be remembered that the *earth* here spoken of and meant as that whereinto the fire was cast, is the *earth* of the world of spirits ; the middle state or place between the heavens and the hells, already so frequently mentioned. For when a man puts off the mortal body and enters that world, he seems to himself to be in a region somewhat like the earth he has just left, arising from this circumstance, — that above him he sees the heavens, like vast expanses in different directions and at different distances, glittering with light, while below him are those caverns of darkness, the regions and dwelling-places of the lost. Hence, in the language of spirits, that middle region of their world is commonly called *the earth* ; and this mode of speaking is several times adopted in these chapters, as also elsewhere in the prophets.]

After the angel had cast in the fire out of the golden censer, we read that “ there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.” These words describe the *commotion* which ensued in those communities, on the heavenly influences being brought down to them and rendered operative upon them. The influx of such love, and the promulgation

of such truth, caused great agitation and disturbance among them. It created a ferment. It gave rise to a talk, followed by discussions about these new things, with reasonings made for and against. These are represented by the "voices" which were heard.

There then met in that world two opposing spheres of thought and feeling, — two spiritual atmospheres, charged with two contrary kinds of spiritual electricity. The pure air of heaven was flowing down and mingling and coming in contact with the impure air of a lower region. Hence, the excitement which ensued, — the fierce contentions that arose, the noisy debates that took place, the angry passions that were aroused, uttering themselves in loud and violent denunciations of the truth, — amid all which confusion and strife there are yet distinctly seen bright flashes of the heavenly light, renewing itself at intervals; — all these are spoken of correspondentially in the prophecy, as "*thunderings and lightnings.*" And it is difficult to call up an imagery more striking, or more appropriate to set forth such a state of things. The *earthquake* which followed, represents the commotion resulting in an *entire change of state* in and throughout that community.

Things almost the same happen in populations on earth, sometimes when visited by new and important ideas on religious, moral, or even political subjects. Thus, how violent were the agitations caused by the Protestant Reformation; and how successive communities in Europe were torn to pieces by the wars that marked its early progress! What a tempest and what an earthquake followed the promulgation of those ideas which led to the great French Revolution!

And our own country at the present moment offers an exemplification of this spiritual law. We are, indeed, as a community, undergoing one species of judgment. Our institutions are being tried by the test of certain practical principles, in which the hearts of different classes of men are greatly but variously interested. In our case, first came the "voices," — the reasonings, the discussions, the debates, the controversies. Then came the more violent agitations, — the mental "thunderings and lightnings," which immediately preceded the appeal to arms. Now, we are in the midst of the still more external and manifest "thunderings and lightnings" of war, with the angry strifes and sharp contests which it indicates and involves. And all this, as we may clearly see, must at length result in "an earthquake," which, indeed, is already going on. For, as the event passes, and order and quiet are once more restored, we shall discover that there has been effected, in many respects, *a change of state* throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Now those mental laws, which are so clearly discernible in this world, are equally operative in the other; while there, in the spiritual world, their results are most wonderful and manifest; where many outward impediments are withdrawn, and where every circumstance quickens and facilitates their operation. Can we at all wonder, then, that divine and heavenly ideas, carried down thither by angels, and sent down for that purpose, should cause a judgment and a separation of classes, in those mixed communities of the world of spirits?

"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."

The sounding of these trumpets symbolizes the proclamation of the Truth in those communities, and the consequent calling together of the righteous scattered through and mingled with them. The law of the Jewish church, upon which this symbolism is based, is given in the tenth chapter of Numbers. Moses was commanded to make *trumpets* of silver for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. They were to blow with them in days of gladness, and on festivals, and at new moons, and over burnt offerings and sacrifices. Also, when they went to war against enemies that infested them, it was ordered that they should blow an alarm with the *trumpets*, and it was promised that then they should come into remembrance before the Lord their God, and be preserved from their enemies. Hence they were employed in that manner among the Israelites, and the sound became familiar to the ears of the nation. Their most common use was that of summoning the congregation together for the worship of Jehovah. And from a knowledge of these customs, we readily perceive the prophetic meaning of the emblem. Thus, in Joel, where the judgment is foretold, we read, — “Blow ye the *trumpet* in Zion, and *sound an alarm* in my holy mountain, for the day of Jehovah cometh.” And in one place in Isaiah it is said, — “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great *trumpet* shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish, * * * and shall worship Jehovah in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.” And our Lord, in Matthew, where He speaks of His second coming, and of the very judgment we are now studying, says, — “And He shall send His angels, with a great *sound of a*

trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, — from one end of heaven to the other.”

We see, then, that by the sounding of the trumpets, is prefigured the proclamation of the truth, and the consequent summoning together, in the world of spirits, of all those who acknowledge the Lord, and listen to His voice, to come forth to meet Him, and join themselves with those who are principled in His worship, and who are to remain so forever.

The correspondence of this symbol appears to lie in this ; — a *trumpet* is a prolongation or extension of the human voice by means of an instrument, causing it to be heard in parts where, otherwise, it would not be enabled to reach. And so it becomes, by an apt and strong analogy, an image of the instrumentalities which the Lord employs for the diffusion of His truth. He sends it forth in the spiritual world, by angelic agency, and in the natural world, by human agency, while the truth itself is nothing else than a prolongation of the voice of the Almighty, — an extension, into more distant regions, of the original Divine utterance.

We can see this significance forcibly embodied in the occurrences which took place when the Lord descended upon Mt. Sinai, in the presence of all the people of Israel, to promulgate the law, — that great summary of Divine truth contained in the Ten Commandments. In addition to the other mighty wonders on that occasion, we read that there was heard “the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people in the camp trembled.” * * * “And Mt. Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire ; and the smoke thereof as-

cended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the *trumpet* sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice."

Moses, and the letter of the law given through him, were thence to become, as it were, the *trumpet* of Jehovah, speaking His truth, and making it known to the people and to the ages.

Thus, as we see, the prophetic idea carried in this representation of the *seven trumpets*, is that of a full or perfect proclamation of Divine truth; — the number seven denoting what is full or perfect. And from the connection in which it stands, we see, also, that here it has reference to the promulgation of the Doctrines of the spiritual sense of the Word, by the Lord at His second coming, through the agency of angels, in those communities of spirits that were then about to be judged. And, indeed, as a consequence, the proclamation of that truth throughout the [intermediate] world of spirits. Such promulgation at the same time being in effect a summons or invitation to His people, — to the obedient and well-disposed of every name and kind — scattered through those populations, to come out from among them, and gather themselves together under His leadership.

In one of the prophetic Psalms it is said, — "Blessed is the people that know the joyful *sound*; they shall walk, oh Jehovah, in the light of thy countenance." And our Lord declares, — "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand."

But what we have thus far stated is not the whole. As before observed, after the angelic exploration, and the prophetic declaration of the qualities beheld, there comes the actual trial by truth. And now, these *seven trumpets* which proclaim the truth, and summon together the Lord's faithful ones, also try the hearts and the reins of the wicked in those communities, laying bare and describing the iniquities which there abound, together with the false principles of belief, or false maxims of life, which cover or confirm those iniquities, thus serving to defend and increase them. This may be abundantly gathered from the dreadful symbolism of these two chapters, presenting a succession of scenes, picturing in the strongest manner the various elements of disorder, disaster, and woe. Each successive trump — every new truth proclaimed — is a fresh inlet of destruction. Each symbolic picture is, if it were possible, still more dreadful than the one which went before, until at length the pit opens her mouth, i. e. the hell with which that community is in association by means of its evils, and seems prepared and ready to swallow up those who remain, with everything that belongs to them. It is indeed an uncovering of the state, with the consequent disaster, not unlike that which happened to Sodom and Gomorrah after righteous Lot and his family had been gathered out of them.

Space will not allow us to descend to the particulars of this symbolism; an explanation of each thing would involve much time, and no doubt weary the patience of many. The meaning of every figure and of every clause, with the reasons therefor, may be read in the Writings of the Church, and to those Writings, there-

fore, we point the inquirer for them. We shall confine ourselves at present to the general idea involved, with a few illustrations drawn from two or three of the symbols.

The Law of all this symbolism, as we have constantly maintained, is that of the correspondence or analogy existing between spiritual and natural things. Outward, visible, material objects are employed in the prophetic language as types or emblems of inward, invisible, spiritual things; — as types or emblems of the things relating to heaven and the church, — things in the hearts and minds and characters of men and spirits.

Hence the movements described in these chapters, — as of the moon and stars and mountains, and other objects visible in the natural world, do not mean actual commotions occurring in these visible bodies, but represent, by a strong and striking analogy, corresponding movements of a spiritual nature, taking place in the other world.

As an illustration of this law, let us take the description of what happened when the third angel sounded, given in the tenth and eleventh verses.

“And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.”

These words have been not unfrequently applied to some celebrated conqueror, the march of whose armies has been marked by destruction and bloodshed. Thus

Genseric, the barbarian, who in one age devastated some of the finest provinces of the Western Roman Empire,* has been pointed out as the “star Wormwood.” Others have thought it might refer to Alaric, the Goth; others, again, to Atilla, the Hun, or these successive trumpets to this succession of leaders. If writing now, such commentators might designate some other leader or emperor nearer our own day, as being this star. Such a course of interpretation, however, opens a wide door for the exercise of the imagination, and leaves the meaning of Scripture indeterminate and vague.

From what has preceded, it will be inferred that we need not go off to distant countries in the natural world, nor search the records of profane history, to find the star Wormwood; it is an existence of a different order, and some degrees of the quality it denotes may be found much nearer home, — even in the hearts and minds of many of ourselves.

It will be remembered that the *fire* from the golden censer, cast by the angel into the earth, was explained to mean the carrying down of angelic *love* into those lower communities, and the consequent trial of *their* love, to see of what quality it was. And it was mentioned that this trial might disclose serious discrepancies, bringing to light affections and feelings in those communities quite contrary to the mild and gentle impulses of truly Christian or heavenly love. So, here, in these words, we find described the results of one stage of that trial. We here see pictured one of the states of wrong feeling, or wicked love, then discovered and manifested. We read that this star was seen

* African provinces.

“*burning*, as it were a lamp.” From the connection in which it stands, we can easily see that this “*burning*” signifies the flaming up of a wicked love, and not of a good one; in other words, that it typifies a certain *evil disposition* of mind, manifested and found to exist in that society of spirits, — a burning zeal for something wrong.

But what particular evil is meant? What wrong desire, to which the human heart is prone, is here specifically set forth? We are told that the name of it is *Wormwood*. But what is the meaning of *wormwood*? What is the prophetic sense conveyed by that term? Let us turn to the Scriptures themselves, and see if they afford us any light on the subject.

We find it mentioned for the first time in the twenty-ninth of Deuteronomy. The people are there commanded at great length, and with peculiar emphasis, to enter into covenant with Jehovah, to keep the precepts of His truth, and be obedient to them. And the reason given for thus urging them to give special heed to these principles of Revealed Truth, is this; — “Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a *root* that beareth *gall* and *wormwood*; and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.”

Here we see distinctly portrayed what is meant by *wormwood*. Here there is divulged to us what the *root of bitterness* is. It is that disposition of the hu-

man heart which leads men to accept falsity instead of truth. Which leads them to parry or turn aside the direct application of the divine precepts to themselves, going out in search of false maxims of life, by which to live, and regulate their practice. The disposition which refuses credence to the grave denunciations made in the Divine Word against wicked ways, — saying all the time, My self indulgence cannot cost me dear ; I shall dwell in peace though I do gratify my propensities, though I do add drunkenness to thirst. This disposition, when it is yielded to, runs out into the falsification of the truth, in various ways. It not unfrequently quotes Scripture in a wrong sense, in order to fortify a wrong position, or confirm the propriety of improper courses. Hence it becomes the fruitful source of corrupt views and false doctrines of every kind ; — a root of spiritual bitterness.

It is for this reason, therefore, that the Lord's people are here so strongly urged to give particular heed to the declarations of His truth, — that this evil disposition might be removed from their hearts. Now, the sense in which the symbol *wormwood* is employed here in Deuteronomy, is the basis of the prophetic usage, and is precisely the sense in which it is employed in every case where it occurs in Scripture.

In the prophets, it is usually coupled with *water* ; and the reason of this will be quite obvious when we reflect that *waters*, when used in a good sense, mean truths, as was explained in our second discourse. They mean the maxims by which men live. They are pure and holy waters, if drawn from the Divine Word, but bitter waters, if drawn from the thoughts and imaginations of an evil heart. And because the Jewish

church had greatly falsified the truths of their Scriptures, bringing in many unwarrantable traditions to turn aside the pure observances of their law, they are thus denounced in Jeremiah, — “Behold, I will feed this people with *wormwood*, and give them water of *gall* to drink.” And in another place in the same prophet, — “Thus saith Jehovah concerning the prophets; Behold, I will feed them with *wormwood*, and I will make them drink the water of gall; for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth in all the earth.”

To *drink* the water of gall, is, of course, to *imbibe* these false maxims of life, and to live by them. And in Amos, the Jewish church is charged with turning the judgments of Jehovah into *wormwood*.

So we might follow this mode of expression through the Scripture, wherever it is used in the prophets, in the Psalms, and in Proverbs, and we should see that in every instance it will yield a similar clear and consistent meaning. And we can come back to the star which is called wormwood in the Book of Revelation, better prepared to understand its signification, as well as to extract the lessons conveyed by this description.

It is said that this star fell upon the *rivers* and the *fountains of waters*; — a mode of expression that will be readily understood in the light of the explanations now given. For, as by *rivers* are denoted the maxims of religious life current in a community, or, in other words, the streams of religious opinion flowing through it, and by the *fountains of waters*, are meant the *sources* from whence those opinions are drawn, — we can see that on *them* is precisely where this *worm-*

wood would naturally fall. For this disposition of the carnal or unregenerated heart to falsify the truth, of course, the moment it begins to act, falls upon the religious thought of the community, exercising itself in vitiating and corrupting its opinions. And it makes its assaults upon the fountain of those opinions, by inducing misinterpretations of Scripture, the original source from whence those opinions are drawn. If we look back to the past history of the church in its several branches, Greek, Roman Catholic, and Protestant, and also to the world by which the church has been surrounded, we shall see to how great an extent this disposition has prevailed among mankind. Sometimes denying the efficacy of the truth altogether, but oftener, stepping within the pale of the nominal church, choosing to exercise itself there, disturbing the pure waters of Christian teaching, by the hatching of new opinions; sometimes erecting a very subordinate subject into a matter of the first importance; sometimes substituting the traditions of men, for the clear utterances of the Divine Word. But oftener than all, enshrining itself in the hearts of individual members, inducing them to look through a false medium upon the requirements of duty, and leading them to repose with confidence in the external observances of the church, or in the abstract exercises of a merely intellectual faith, for salvation. Operating in the minds of different persons in an indefinite number of different ways, but having, all the while, as its essential characteristic, the endeavor to turn men aside from simple obedience, to the precepts of truth in the practical conduct of life.

It is added here, — “And many men died of the

waters, because they were made bitter." How true this is! Many spirits in that community, then about to be judged, had brought themselves within the power of "the second death" by imbibing and living from false maxims of life or duty. The spirits here spoken of were already dead as to their mortal bodies, and hence the word *death* as applied to them, means *spiritual* death, or as it is elsewhere called, "the second death," — the death of the soul, by its permanent union with the spheres and the regions of evil. But what was true of them is true of men in all ages. In all ages men have died of such waters: in all ages men have perished, as to their souls, by imbibing and living from false and selfish maxims of life. The root of bitterness is planted in every human heart. It springs up there from seed sown by the evil one. It flourishes to some extent in us all. But as we are free moral agents and rational beings, the degree to which it flourishes will depend upon ourselves. When we find such a disposition operating within us, counselling the indulgence of selfishness, to the neglect of the simple truth, which demands righteousness of life, — we must endeavor to suppress it, — we must weed it out of our garden, for we read that every plant which our Heavenly Father hath not planted must be rooted up; and this one, if allowed to grow, will turn our waters of life to bitterness. For if indulged, it gives us at length a relish for false maxims, — for maxims which embody the evil wisdom of selfishness, of personal emolument, and worldly success, — and a distaste for the simple truths which constitute the pure waters of the river of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the sanctuary of the Lord, —

from the throne of God and of the Lamb, from the Inspired Divine Word itself.

We have not time to explain the other symbols. But enough has been given to exhibit the method and law of interpretation. Under it the other symbols can be made equally plain. Each trumpet as it sounds discloses some new disorder found at work in the minds of the evil parts of that community. The meaning of these things, the spiritual sense of Sacred Scripture, the doctrines of the New Jerusalem, are not matters of the imagination; they are not left to conjecture; they are not affirmed on human authority. Each thing is declared on Divine authority. It is the Lord's own commentary upon His own Book, — the prolongation of the Divine Voice, uttering itself through the letter of the Word, — the declarations of the Bible itself in regard to its own meaning.

And hence it is a system of interpretation that cannot change. It is the absolute system and must last forever. It is the way in which the truth is understood in heaven, and has been revealed to bring about unity of belief and concord of opinion in the church on earth. For we read that "they shall see eye to eye when Jehovah shall bring again Zion;" and that "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." It constitutes the test, therefore, to which all other systems are to be brought, and the standard by which they are to be judged.

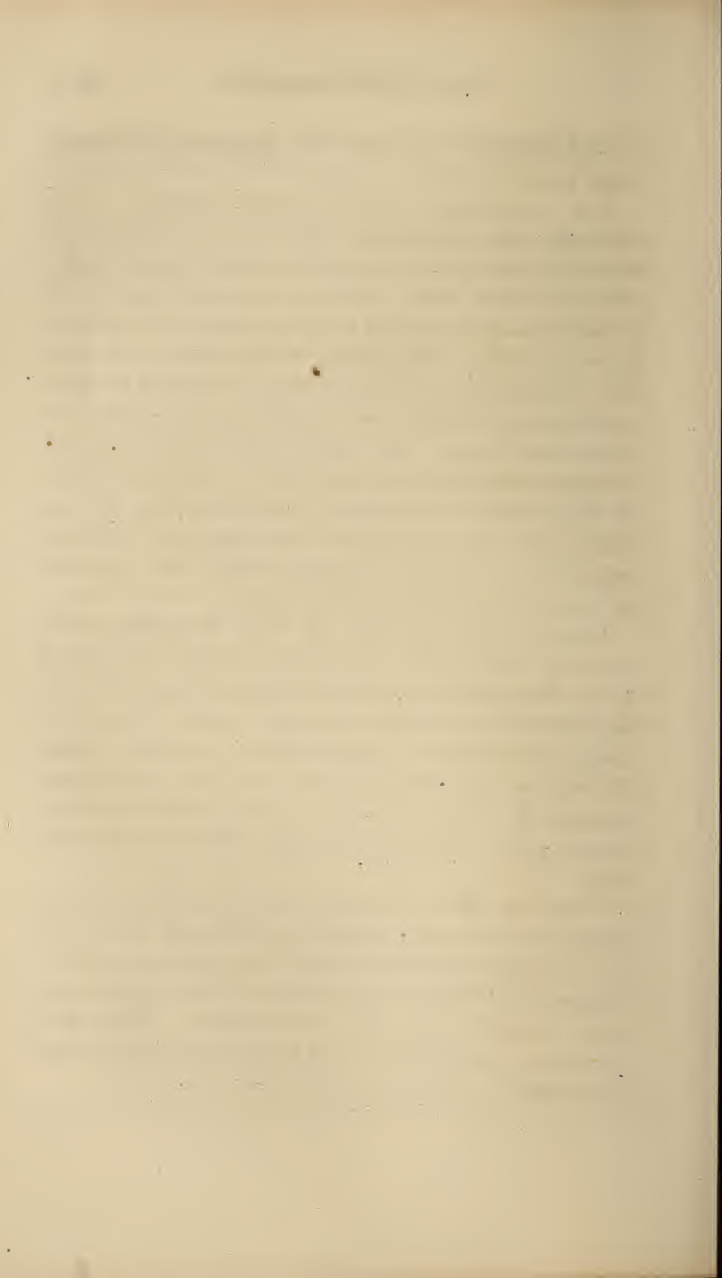
But why are these things promulgated now? Why is the spiritual sense of the Word revealed, and why

are the principles on which the judgment is effected, made known to men?

It is on account of their practical bearing. It is that men may see what in reality are the demands of heavenly purity in the other life, and so prepare themselves for them here. It is now the privilege of all, if they choose, to submit to the judgment before they leave the body. They may, of themselves, if they will, bring home the Trial by truth, as carried to those communities, to their own characters; to their own hearts and lives. The same truths which effected judgment there will effect it here. And in the light of these things recorded in the Revelation, we can search our own dispositions and purposes, and see what it is necessary to remove, and, with the help of the Lord, we may put them away.

It is in this way that the New Jerusalem is to descend. It is in this way that the church on earth is to become purified, and the kingdom of universal peace be established; the glorious age for the church, so frequently foretold in the prophets, be realized; when the way of life becomes plain, and the obstructions existing in human character, to the inflowing of the Lord's goodness and mercy, shall be moved out of the way.

"No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there; and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."



LECTURE VII.

TESTIMONY OF THE TWO WITNESSES.

CONTENTS :—THE 10TH AND 11TH CHAPTERS CONSIDERED ; THE “ MIGHTY ANGEL ” REPRESENTS THE LORD HIMSELF ; THE “ LITTLE BOOK IN HIS HAND OPEN ” SIGNIFIES DOCTRINE CONCERNING HIMSELF NOW EXPLAINED. IN THESE TWO CHAPTERS ARE SET FORTH THE TRUTHS THEMSELVES BY WHICH TRIAL OR JUDGMENT IS MADE, — THE STANDARD TO WHICH HUMAN SPIRITS ARE BROUGHT IN THE ETERNAL WORLD. THE TWO WITNESSES ARE THE TWO GRAND TRUTHS OF ALL RELIGION, — DOCTRINE CONCERNING GOD AND DOCTRINE CONCERNING LIFE, OR MAN’S DUTIES. ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SCRIPTURE.

1851

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LECTURE.

“And I saw another mighty Angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and, when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.” — *Rev. x. 1, 2, 3.*

The subject, this evening, is the Two Witnesses, and the Testimony which they utter; but we begin with the preceding chapter, because its contents are closely connected therewith; the idea being continuous from one chapter to the other.

We are to remember that the scene is laid, as heretofore, in the world of spirits; and the general subject treated is the Judgment, still proceeding. We have already contemplated that event in some of its stages. We have witnessed the opening of the Book, and the disclosure of new and more important spiritual truths therefrom, which, in the hands of the angels, became the *means* of Judgment. We have followed the exploration made by their light, and have heard the heavenly declarations as to the spiritual qualities of some of the populations about to be judged. At our last meeting, we proceeded one stage farther, and began to contemplate those communities

of spirits, as they appeared after the heavenly influences had begun to descend to them, and take effect among them. We commenced, indeed, to behold something of the actual Trial by Truth, and to witness some of the results to which it gave rise. Those results were depicted by the symbolism used to describe the things which successively followed the sounding of the first *six* of the seven trumpets. We have seen that the trial developed qualities existing there, quite contrary to the truth and to heavenly love.

We come now, to-day, to the sounding of the *seventh* and last trumpet, and this subject comprises the contents of these two chapters. The single idea we have to contemplate in studying them, is this, — here is described *the truth* by which those communities were tried. Here are given the Doctrines which formed the standard of exploration and judgment. In the tenth chapter, by the *little book* seen in the angel's hand, is described the great central truth of the Divine Word, — that concerning the being and attributes of God. While, in the eleventh chapter, under the name of *two witnesses*, there are set forth the two grand truths of all religion, which bear the Lord's testimony among all people, and in every age of the world; namely, — Doctrine concerning God, and Doctrine concerning life, or man's duty. These are truths which have a practical interest for *us*, and the unfolding of some of the beautiful and striking imagery of these chapters, cannot fail to instruct and enlighten us all.

To repeat the text: —

“And I saw another mighty Angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud ; and a rainbow was upon His head, and His face was as it were the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire : and He had in His hand a little book open : and He set His right foot upon the sea, and His left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth : and when He had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.”

It will not be difficult to perceive that “the mighty Angel” spoken of here, is the Lord Himself. The description of His appearance is similar to that given of Him in the first chapter of this Book, and similar, too, to the description by the prophet Daniel, when He appeared to him. Under the Jewish Dispensation, the Lord always appeared to the prophets and seers of that church, by means of an angel ; that is, in and through an angel ; and the angel so employed was called the Angel of Jehovah. Hence, the Lord Himself is sometimes spoken of in the Scripture as an Angel ; but always accompanied by some expression by which it may be perceived and known who is meant. Thus we read of the Angel of His Presence, of the Angel of the Covenant, and here He is called “a mighty Angel,” while the description of His Person is the same as that elsewhere given of the Lord.

He had in His hand a little book open. We have already seen what was meant by the great Book with the seven seals, viz : that it was the Bible, the Revealed Scripture, or Word of the Lord. And it will not be difficult to perceive that a *little book*, in this connection, is significative of some *portion* of the Bible, or of some important teaching of Divine Truth.

As already stated, it represents the Divine Word with respect to the great central truth contained therein ; — that concerning the Being and attributes of God. For, as all may see, the truth that there is a God, and then what are His attributes, or qualities and characteristics, is the first great subject of all Divine Revelation. Besides, the fact that this little book was held in the hand of the Lord, under so striking and remarkable a manifestation as is here presented, may help us still further to see that the truth here symbolized and meant, must be *Doctrine concerning Himself*. The more the entire representation is examined in the light of correspondences, the more will this idea of its meaning impress itself on the mind. All the surrounding tokens concur in pointing this out.

We have already explained, in a former discourse, that, in the Book of Revelation, and in this New Dispensation, the Lord communicates to men a new and clearer idea concerning Himself. We explained also, to some extent, what this idea is, namely, that, in the Lord, dwells the fulness of the Godhead, bodily ; that there is but *one* Divine Person, our Lord and Saviour, who has all power in heaven and on earth, to whom we are to look, and upon whom we are to call, and whom we are to worship. He assumed humanity, and came into the world, clothing His unsearchable Divinity in a visible form, that He might save men, and that they might have a distinct and apprehensible form to look to and to love. In Him, therefore, Divinity, and a Humanity glorified and rendered divine, exist together, as soul and body exist together in man, one and inseparable ; the indwelling Divinity being called the Father, and the assumed Humanity being called the Son.

That this doctrine is now explained, and no longer left a mystery as in the past ages of the church, is seen from the fact that the book was *open* in His hand, and no longer sealed up, as the Bible was at the beginning of the vision. We also mentioned before that this idea of the Lord, though declared in the prophets from the first, has fallen into the ideas of men only gradually, as the thought of the church and of the ages has been progressively prepared to receive it. The Lord told his disciples that the time would come when it should be made known. But he said to them that they could not bear it then ; that he had veiled it to them, speaking in parables, yet the time would come when he should no longer speak to them in parables, but would show them plainly of the Father ; that is, of his own Divinity, and of His Personality and attributes. The fulfilment of all this is here indicated. The revelation of the clear truth concerning the great mystery of the Godhead is here most distinctly set forth. And hence a little further on, in the seventh verse, we read, that “ In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets.” This, therefore, is the first great truth which the trumpet of the seventh angel proclaims, — the time to which the prophet Zachariah refers when he says, “ In that day, the Lord shall be One, and his Name one.” He shall be thought of as one, and spoken of as one, in His Church : and no longer as three, as has been the case in the past ages of the church. Fulfilling also the time dimly foretold by Paul, in fifteenth of First Corinthians, where he says, — “ And when all things

shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." Not that the Lord himself would undergo any change in the future, — for he is unchangeable, but that the church herself in due time, as she became more and more subdued to the obedience of her Divine Master, would come to view him differently; in the light of further truth communicated to her, would come at length to behold him as He really is; no longer regarding, as heretofore, Son and Father as two separate — or even distinct — persons, but seeing them to be only the names of two essential elements of being existing in one and the same Person, — God indeed — being the all in all.

And this same apostle, only a few pages before, speaking of himself and fellow apostles, says, "For, now we know [only] in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Thus do the Scriptures everywhere look forward to and prepare the way for a clearer Revelation of truth from the Word, a new and fuller dispensation of light and life, to be fulfilled in the new Jerusalem.

The voice from heaven said unto John, — "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel."

This is what all heaven is saying to us to-day. "Go, take the little book that is open." "Receive this great Doctrine concerning himself which the Lord has now caused to be explained and made clear." And how anxious the angels are that it should be received by

men! How much they desire it! It is the idea according to which they conduct all their worship. It is the Doctrine or View of Him which reigns throughout all heaven. And they are in the constant wish and desire that men should regard and acknowledge Him, as they do, as the only God of heaven and earth; that thus earthly worship may come to correspond to heavenly worship; that the Lord may be able to draw nearer to men spiritually, and bless them to a greater degree; and that the Lord's will may begin to be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

And the "mighty Angel," — i. e., the Lord Himself. — said to John, — "*Take it, and eat it up,*" — "*Take it, and eat it up!*" This is the Divine injunction addressed to us to-day; — addressed to the Lord's church in all future time. He desires to be acknowledged by men in his true character, as He really is. The Doctrine is to be eaten and digested spiritually. It is to be received and appropriated. It must be received into the understanding and appropriated by the will: and thus applied to nourish and sustain the spiritual life. It must be turned into bread, — into living bread, for it cometh from Him, and is truly meat indeed, to the soul.

The reason why this little book is said to be *sweet* to the taste, but *bitter* in the digestion and appropriation, is, because, like all other divine — and like all other spiritual and heavenly truth, it is more pleasant as a merely intellectual acquisition, than it is as a practical precept. When introduced into the thought it may not be repugnant. There is a certain satisfaction in the acquisition of new and clear ideas on important subjects. The desire for knowledge is grati-

fied by it; and the understanding experiences a certain expansion and exhilaration from the reception of new and remarkable thoughts. The bitterness comes from the attempt to apply spiritual truths in practice. We then find that we have in our hearts many disorderly propensities which render the practice of the truth difficult and distasteful. When the children of Israel, on leaving Egypt, came, on the first day's journey, to the waters of Marah, they found them *bitter*, which was to signify that the divine maxims of life, by which they would be required to walk, would be distasteful to their natural inclinations. It is so with us all. And the reason why this true Doctrine concerning the Lord, is set forth as bitter in appropriation, is because, when received practically, it involves self-denial; it involves taking up the cross, and following Him in the regeneration. It involves obedience to His precepts, — the giving up of our old, selfish wills, and the doing of His will. We are called upon to go forward in His strength, and overcome even as He overcame. Hence there is no difficulty in perceiving wherein lies the *bitterness* of reception, which comes as this great spiritual truth descends, from the head, and progressively takes effect upon the things of the interior life, — upon the heart, and upon the actual conduct.

We read that this "mighty Angel," — who is the Lord Himself, "cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth." This is a form of representation frequently made use of in Scripture, concerning the Lord. In the description of Him in the first chapter of Revelation, it is said that He spake with "a great Voice,

as of a Trumpet ; ” and elsewhere it is declared that His voice is like the sound of many waters. And so in Jeremiah, it is prophesied, “ The Lord shall *roar* from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation ; He shall mightily roar upon this habitation ; He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth ; a noise shall come even to the ends of the earth.” (xxv. 30.) And in the third chapter of Joel, — “ The Lord also shall *roar* out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem ; and the heavens and the earth shall shake.”

These expressions in the letter, are no doubt intended to impress on the natural mind and heart, a deep sense of the Divine majesty and power ; and the great danger there is in offending against them ; but in the spiritual idea, they are expressive of deep feeling or emotion on the part of the Maker and Saviour of men. The roar of the lion, which is the loudest sound in the whole range of animated nature, is a cry uttered when the animal is moved by some vivid sensation or strong impulse. And *men* are disposed to utter themselves loudly, when strongly moved in their feelings. Hence the most forcible symbols that can be found in nature, are chosen to set forth the depth and power of the Divine emotions, that men may, from correspondence, be impressed with some idea of them, and that that idea, wholly inadequate as it must of necessity be, may yet be sufficiently correct, as far as it does extend. Now, as we know, the Lord is called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and the cry described in the text, as being uttered by Him on this occasion, is one expressive of deep lamentation or sorrow,

growing out of a strong desire or love. Every one familiar with the themes of natural history, is well aware of the almost invincible repugnance which the lion feels, to relinquish the prey which was, or which seemed to be, already within his grasp ; and the loudness with which he is disposed to utter himself, when it is removed from him. And this has been employed in the prophets to set forth the yearning which the Lord has towards men, the disinclination he feels in having them drawn away from Him by the evil one, and the bitter disappointment His tender love suffers when deprived of that spiritual conjunction with His church, which He so much desires and seeks. He longs to have them look to Him, and love Him, and receive Him as He is. And if these infinite emotions of our Lord and Redeemer, our Creator and Saviour, *were* to be expressed audibly, — in a manner at all adequate, or at all corresponding to them, they would utter themselves in the loudest tones it is possible to conceive of, giving forth, indeed, volumes of sound that would shake our whole material atmosphere, the heavens and the earth.

The figure, then, which we are here examining, shows this, — that the Lord felt grief at the time of the judgment, that so many men — being in evil — were lost to Him, that so many even of His nominal church, were found, at the last trial, to turn away from Him ; and, also, His strong desire that spirits and men shall receive Him as He is, according to the new and clear truth He now reveals concerning Himself, that so, in future, He may be able to draw nearer to them, bless them more fully, and save them, — both in larger numbers, and to higher degrees of spiritual attainment.

Listen now to the last words of this text. "And when He had cried, *seven thunders* uttered their voices." This is one of the most beautiful and significant metaphors in the whole range of prophetic language. The natural idea of thunder is that of a *heavenly noise*, — and many thunders would be a prolongation of the sound, rolling along through successive regions of the sky. It is here employed to typify the lasting and profound sympathy with the Lord, which all heaven feels, in these strong emotions of His towards the church, and towards men. They partake of His love, and of His desire in this respect. And they are here represented as responding thus to the Divine Voice. For, as in the natural world, any loud or violent sound, like the roar of a lion, would be heard repeating itself as it went forth among the valleys and hillsides, in a succession of reverberations, growing more and more distant as it rolled along, — so, the correspondential idea here carried, is that of the loud tones of the Divine Voice, waking thus the echoes of the Spiritual World, and calling out from those heavenly communities, — as it rolls along, far away among the hills and valleys of the heavenly world, through their mighty and unnumbered populations, — responsive accents, filled with sympathy, and expressive of the fullest consent and agreement.

It is, indeed, the whole heavenly world, described as responding to or reëchoing the sentiments and feelings which fill the heart and animate the mind of their beloved Lord and Master.

We have thus examined the tenth chapter, and in so doing have prepared ourselves to understand in

shorter compass, the contents of the eleventh, in which the Two Witnesses are spoken of. That it is the *Truth* itself which bears witness or gives testimony, and which is therefore prophetically called a witness, falls readily into the reason, besides conforming to abundant Scripture usage. Hence, our Lord Himself, who was a perfect embodiment and exemplar of the whole Divine truth, in his own person, so as to be called the very truth itself, for the same reason is called also, — “The faithful and true Witness.” (Rev. i. 5.)

As already observed, these two witnesses mean the two grand Truths of Religion which the Lord has ordained to bear testimony of Him in all ages, before all the earth, viz: first, Truth concerning God, and secondly, Truth concerning Man. The first of these we have been speaking of while explaining the meaning of the “little book” open in the Angel’s hands. And as we examine the subject carefully, we shall perceive that all Divine Revelation arranges itself under these two heads. Everything contained in the Bible relates to one or the other. Either to the Divine Being, his government, his character, his attributes, his providence, his operations, his works of redemption and salvation; or else, to Man, his creation, his being, his condition and wants by nature, his destiny, his relations to his Maker, his duties, and the means of his salvation. This analysis exhausts the circle of theology. There is no topic in the whole range of religious inquiry, but refers itself at once to one or the other of these two Heads.

These things reappear constantly throughout the Bible. The Law, given through Moses, containing

the *truth* then revealed, and summed up in the ten commandments, was declared to be the perpetual "witness" established between God and His people. This Law, as you all know, was written on *two* tables of stone, one being for God and the other for man. One containing the duties we owe to the Lord, the other containing the duties we owe to the neighbor. And in Deuteronomy, where the Law was summed up by Divine command in the shortest possible compass, it is stated under these two heads, — a command to love the Lord supremely and with all the heart, and another, to love the neighbor as ourselves. And our Lord Himself, in the gospel, reaffirms these two grand truths, as containing the sum and substance of all Religious Teaching, saying to His disciples, that on these two "hang all the Law and the Prophets."

For this reason also it was made a statute of their civil code, that no man should be put to death except on the concurrent testimony of at least *two witnesses*; and the necessity of such a testimony became a common saying. When the two tables were laid away in the ark, they were named tables of *witness*; the ark which contained them was called the ark of *the testimony*; and when the priest entered behind the veil, into the holy of holies where the ark was deposited, it was called going in unto *the testimony*. And over the ark were placed *two* cherubim, to symbolize the Divine Presence, and as if to watch and to guard.

So those tables, with the truths which effect conjunction between God and man written on them, were the *two witnesses* which bore the Divine testimony in all the ages of the Jewish church. It was also customary for them to speak of their whole Word in this

twofold manner, summing the Books which contained it under the two heads of Law and Prophets. And now, when the Divine Word is complete, we have it in the form of the Two Testaments, or Witnesses, the Old and the New.

We have already seen how much the symbolism of the Book of Revelation is based upon the divinely given statutes of the Jewish Law, and also here, when treating of these two witnesses, the Apostle continues, — “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the *ark of His testament*,” — or testimony. In other words, the *ark of His two witnesses*, — the ark containing the two tables of the Law.

Thus, from a careful observation of the things contained in the literal sense of Scripture, the truths of the spiritual sense are clearly and rationally confirmed ; and we see distinctly who, or rather what, the Lord’s Two Witnesses are.

[Because these two witnesses are spoken of as prophets, it has been conjectured by some, that some two personal prophets are referred to, who in the latter days shall return to the earth, declaring the truth anew ; and Moses and Elias, because they came and stood on the mount of transfiguration with our Lord, are sometimes designated as probably the two. Others suppose that there are to be two future prophets raised up at that time.

But as men come to cast off first natural impressions, and reflect in an elevated manner concerning the nature of Divine Truth and the character of the Revealed Word of God, they will cease giving it these limited applications to men and things, clearly per-

ceiving that in its essential meaning it must of necessity rise above merely local and personal considerations, and express broad general principles and laws, reaching everywhere, universal in application, and enduring forever. It is quite common for the prophetic language of Scripture to personify certain principles of truth, as well as certain spiritual qualities, for the sake of vivid representation, and here these two great truths are spoken of as prophets, in accordance with an extensive Scripture usage. That no two persons are meant may be clearly seen from what is said of these witnesses in the prophet Zechariah. It is written in the fourth chapter, The prophet was shown a vision in which was represented something of the future glory of the Lord's kingdom. Besides other things, there were seen standing beside the golden candlestick with seven branches, "two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof." And after the Angel had explained in a measure some portions of the vision to him, the prophet says, "Then answered I, and said unto him, what are these two olive trees, upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof?" To which, it seems, the angel gave him no answer. So the prophet repeats,— "And I answered again, and said unto him, what be these two olive branches, which, through the two golden pipes, empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my Lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand before the Lord of the whole earth."

On a moment's reflection, we can see that these

cannot be persons. For no two men could hold so important a relation. The Lord's kingdom is universal, extending everywhere, and reaching through all ages. Hence any function performed by individual men must be limited and ephemeral in its character. But as soon as we comprehend that these two olive trees, these two anointed ones, standing before the God of the whole earth, exercising so important a function in the perpetuity of His kingdom, are the two grand Truths of Religion which inculcate love to the Lord and love to man, we can then see at once the relevancy and significance of the symbolism. We need not remind those who are familiar with the emblems of Scripture as explained by the law of correspondences, that *golden oil* denotes *heavenly goodness*, flowing into and filling the hearts of men. And while no two *men* that ever lived can be said to be the *pipes* or mediums through which heavenly goodness is conveyed from the Lord to the church universal, yet we can distinctly see that these two grand Truths, proceeding from the Lord, forever speaking His Word, enjoining a life of love towards God, and of charity to Man, with the righteous performance of all duties whatsoever, *are* the "pipes," — are the means or mediums by which heavenly goodness is conveyed to the church universal; by which it is poured into the hearts of the Lord's faithful ones, and rendered effective in their lives.

In the fourth verse of this eleventh chapter of Revelation, besides being spoken of as the two olive trees and the two anointed ones, these two witnesses are called also, "the two *candlesticks* standing before the God of the whole earth." Now, in the natural

idea, a candlestick has simply one use, and that is easily understood. It is an instrument for *dispensing light* ; and it is this service which it uniformly suggests. So, these two grand truths, testifiers concerning God and Man, are, according to the *spiritual* idea, the great dispensers of light ; — standing before the God of the whole earth, the means of shedding forth the rays of spiritual knowledge to all ages and nations.]

When we come to look over the history of the world, we shall be struck with the remarkable providence of the Lord in this respect. It has been so ordered that every people retaining any rational intelligence, has also some form of religion established among them, by which they are instructed and influenced and led. And as we examine these religions with respect to the character of their teachings, this extraordinary fact will be found true of them all, viz : that they are possessed of and teach these two Grand Truths. They every one contain and utter *something* of the testimony of the two witnesses. Many of them teach them obscurely. Many of them mingle and confuse the testimony by the addition of numerous errors. None of those beyond Christendom have them in fulness or clearness. But yet, among them all, ancient and modern, the two grand ideas of Worship and Life are preserved. They all teach that there is a Divine Being, who is to be revered and obeyed, and that the principles of moral life towards the neighbor, set forth in our decalogue, are to be observed and done.

Thus we see that, throughout all history, the Lord has preserved His Two Witnesses alive ; and that these two candlesticks of the Word, standing thus

before the God of the whole earth, have succeeded in sending down some portions of their light even into the murky atmosphere and cloudy gloom of paganism.

It is said here that power was given to these two witnesses ; by which is signified the greater clearness and fulness that is imparted to these truths, now that the spiritual sense of the Scripture is made known, and so every part of the Bible filled with a stronger and more effulgent light. We have already stated the further truth disclosed in the Writings of the New Jerusalem, concerning the Lord, our Creator, as well as our Saviour and Redeemer, and similar things are true, also, of the other witness, — the Doctrine of Life. Much new light of the highest order and of the utmost value, is given in the New Jerusalem, concerning the spiritual nature of man, his life here and hereafter, — concerning his duties, the laws of the human mind, the life of regeneration, with all the infinite ways and means of human improvement and salvation.

That those multitudes, collected in the world of spirits at the time of the Last Judgment, were explored and tried by the standard of these Truths, and that that is what is here described, may be learned from the words with which this chapter opens ; where it is said that a reed was put into the hand of the Apostle, and he was commanded to rise and *measure* the temple of God, and *them that worship therein*. Now, to *measure* the worshippers of God is, of course, to try them by the standard of truth and goodness, and see how nearly they conform to it, or how far they fall short of it.

The treatment which the Two Witnesses are described as receiving at the hands of those populations, is typical of the states of the evil there with respect to these two great truths of life and worship. They disliked them. Wicked men never do like to have their lives or their motives tried by so high a standard as these divine precepts of the gospel. In heart, they are enemies to the truths which teach supreme love to God, and equal love to man. Those truths condemn their wickedness, adjudging it to be evil, and hence they would be glad to destroy the truths; which is meant by their apparently killing the witnesses, allowing them to lie as if dead for three days and a half.

All this is said to have taken place, — where? In any city of the natural world? No, not at all; but in that great city which is *spiritually* called *Sodom* and *Egypt*, where also our Lord was crucified. Thus, a spiritual city; for our Lord was crucified, neither in literal *Sodom*, nor in literal *Egypt*. He was crucified spiritually as well as naturally. He has been crucified and slain, in spirit, in all ages since, by being rejected by a perverse and wicked world, whose *impure will* is symbolized by *Sodom*, and whose *darkened understanding* is typified by *Egypt*, according to prophetic usage.

But these Truths were, in those communities of assembled spirits, and always will be, vindicated in the end by the Lord, and made to appear, as they really are, as divine and heavenly in their origin and character. Thus are they made to ascend up to heaven in the sight of all, being so clearly and so plainly taught, that even their enemies are compelled to behold them.

These Two Witnesses are uttering their testimony to us to-day. It is through obedience to these truths that the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, in which He shall reign forever and ever.

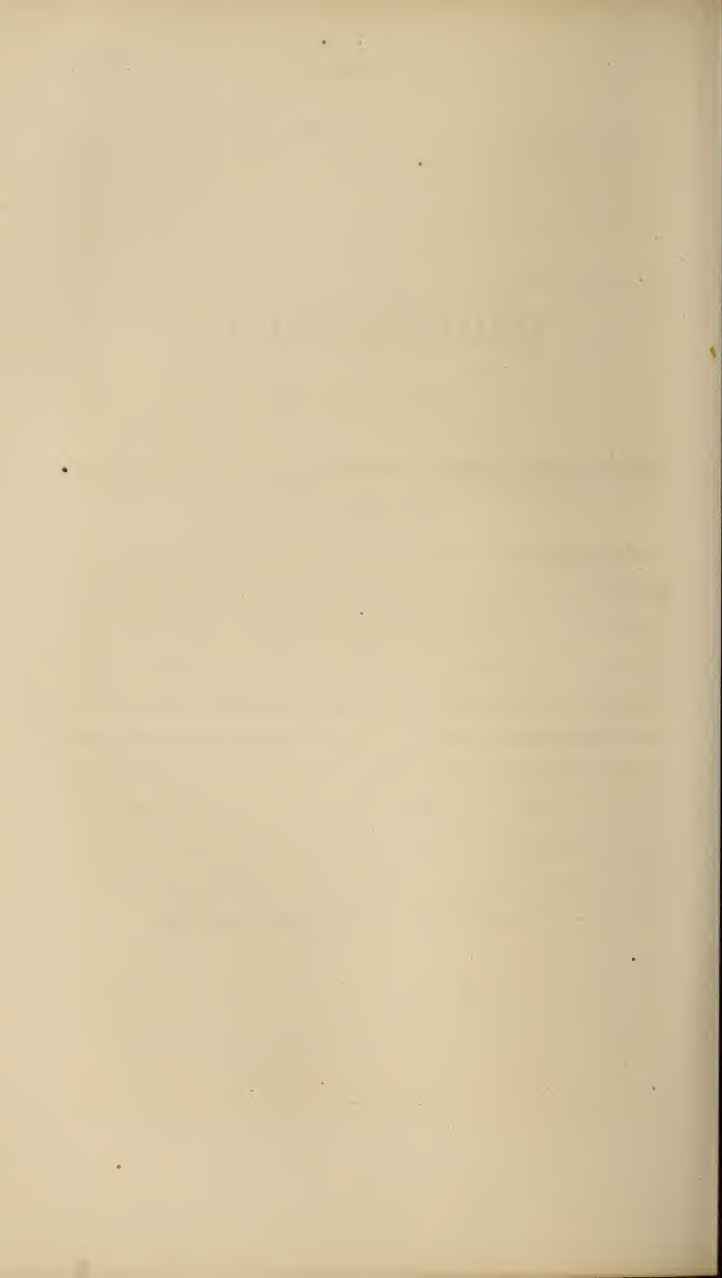
Let it be ours, then, to give these truths a hearty and affectionate reception, living in the effort, with the Lord's help, to conform our conduct to them, that, when we come to have the golden reed applied to the measurement of our spiritual possessions, we shall not be found wanting; but be ready and willing to join in the heavenly anthem here recorded as being sung on that occasion by the four and twenty elders, saying, with them, from the heart:—

“We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come: because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.”
[Rev. xi. 7.]

LECTURE VIII.

THE SEVEN VIALS, WITH THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES.

CONTENTS : — EFFECTS OF THE JUDGMENT ; SEPARATION OF THE GOOD AND EVIL ; CHAPTERS TWELVE TO EIGHTEEN INCLUSIVE ; THE WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN, THE CHURCH IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD ; THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND ON MT. SION, THE NEW HEAVEN ; THE “ EVERLASTING GOSPEL,” THE GOSPEL OF THE SECOND ADVENT ; THE FOUR EVIL BEASTS SEEN, WHICH ARE TYPES OF EVIL LUST, CONTRASTED WITH THE FOUR HEAVENLY BEASTS, WHICH ARE TYPES OF HOLY AFFECTIONS ; THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES, THE SUM OF DIREFUL RESULTS, WHICH FLOW FROM PERSISTENT WICKEDNESS OF LIFE.



LECTURE.

“ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”
— *Rev.* xiv. 6, 7.

We propose to-day to examine seven chapters of this Book, viz: from the twelfth to the eighteenth inclusive. At first sight, this may seem too great an undertaking for a single discourse, and as one involving a too summary or compendious style of statement making it difficult for the hearers to gain a clear idea of the subject matter. But in practice, it may be found to be the most simple method of treatment, fixing the subject better in the mind, and enabling them to remember it more easily than another mode. For the ideas which give the key to the understanding of these chapters are few, simple, and closely connected with each other; and, by confining our attention to them, we shall keep closer to the general scope and tenor of the prophecy, and so avoid overburdening the memory or losing ourselves in a multitude of details.

We are studying the Last Judgment, and the events which accompany it;—the second Advent of the

Lord, by the Revelation of New Truth from the Word. The formation of a New Heaven by Him in the Spiritual World, and the establishment of a New Church, called the New Jerusalem, proclaiming this truth on the earth.

We have followed this grand development through its introductory stages. We have witnessed the exploration of the great multitudes collected in the intermediate world from nominal Christendom, and heard a description of their qualities ; both of those good ones of whom a new heaven could be composed, and of those evil ones who, on account of their characters, could not enter into such a combination. We have also witnessed their Trial by Truth, and seen some of the results disclosed when there was applied to them the standard of those two grand Truths of the Bible which bear the Lord's testimony in every age. The Two Commandments requiring love to God and love to Man.

In the seven chapters to be examined to-day we read first a description of the New Church, next, of the formation of the New Heaven, and then, of the conclusion of the Judgment upon the Christian populations, resulting in the casting down of the evil out of the intermediate world into the regions below. These three things, therefore, will occupy our attention in their order.

There is one principal fact which distinguishes the scenes we are to contemplate to-day from those we have been studying before. Heretofore, we have viewed those populations rather as one great body ; as composed of different classes indeed, yet still as associated, and mingled together in a common mass.

And we have witnessed the successive processes of exploration, angelic visitation, proclamation of the truth, discussion and trial, by which, gradually, a separation was effected, — by which those populations of spirits were sifted, as it were, each kind being drawn away in its appropriate direction, until now, when we come to behold them as actually divided, — as two diverse and opposing bodies, contrary in character, and moving in opposite directions.

Let us look a moment, carefully, at some of the facts we have already been studying, and see what they necessarily imply.

We have seen the opening of the great Book and an explanation of its spiritual meaning. We have heard the sounding of the seven trumpets, and have followed the angels in their descent from heaven to the world of spirits, carrying with them and proclaiming the new truths or doctrines. They went as missionaries to those mixed populations. And we have seen that they gained adherents among them, — a mighty multitude indeed, — even all the good or well disposed to be found in those populations, who thence came out and stood apart by themselves. What, then, is the essential fact that we are here called upon to contemplate? Why, simply this. This heavenly evangelization had resulted in the collection of a great worshipping population; in other words, a *New Church* had been gathered and formed there, under the immediate ministrations of the angels. A church, too, possessing some remarkable characteristics; whose preachers were angels commissioned by the Lord, and whose members were good men that had finished their earthly labors and laid aside their mortal bodies, and who in the

great Day of trial had not been found wanting. "The general assembly and church of the first born;" a church in which good spirits are instructed and prepared, and so made ready to enter those New Heavens, which the Lord also forms at His coming. A church which was not disbanded on the day of its formation, nor in that year, which exists now, and which will exist forever, — whose membership is kept up by the reception into it of obedient and teachable ones constantly going thither from this earth. A church in which the accepted ones, your friends and mine, who have departed from our midst within the last year, within the last month, and last week, are worshipping to-day.

It is this church that is described to us in the twelfth chapter, under the figure of the Woman seen in the higher parts of the spiritual world, clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, "and on her head a crown of twelve stars." The Scriptural usage, by which the church is represented as a *woman*, being also sometimes called a *wife* and *mother*, is so frequent and abundant, as well as so generally acknowledged, that we have no need to prove it, as all will readily assent to its meaning.

The symbolism here employed sets forth her spiritual qualities. Her vesture of sunshine denotes the fulness and clearness of heavenly truth in which she is instructed, as, by derivation from her Divine Master, and in imitation of Him, she clothes herself "with light as with a garment." The moon and stars are prophetic emblems of the faith and knowledge of heavenly and divine things possessed by her. Her "man-child" is the Doctrine which she brings forth,

and promulgates, and teaches to all those that gather around her altars.

In the old prophet, where the Lord's first coming is predicted, it is spoken of in one place in a similar manner. In our version it is, "unto us a *child* is born ; unto us a son is given," &c., but in the original it is, "unto us a man-child is born." We know that when the Lord came the first time, He was born into the world as the Divine Truth ; and so, again, at His Second Advent, it is the truth of Divine Doctrine that the Lord sends into the world through the medium of a church, gathered and organized and instructed for that purpose.

The persecution which this woman in the twelfth chapter is described as having suffered from, represents the opposition which that church in the world of spirits encountered from the evil populations by which it was surrounded, and the manner in which they attempted to treat it. Michael and his angels are the church and its adherents ; its angelic teachers and their followers. The deceiving dragon which fought against them, was the evil principle of false but persuasive reasonings with which wicked spirits assailed and contended against that church founded by the angels. These false reasonings the dragon and his crew poured out of their mouths, it is said, like a flood of devastating water ; endeavoring with them to swallow up the woman and her child ; that is, to overturn and sweep away that church and the Doctrine it was bringing forth and teaching. But we read that that New Church and her doctrine were preserved and protected by the Lord until the whole of that wicked crew were removed, — first from the higher regions of

the land of spirits, and then from the lower, being finally cast down, with their own spiritual kindred, into the regions below.

In turning now to the fourteenth chapter, we pass to a different scene. We rise to a higher plane. We ascend a step in spiritual life, and, by correspondence, also to a higher region of the spiritual world. The view opens once more in heaven: and there the Lord and Saviour is seen, with those who have been saved and taken up. The apostle says, — “ And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts; and the elders; — and no man could learn that song but the one hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from the earth.”

We have already once contemplated this class of persons, the one hundred and forty-four thousand, while studying the seventh chapter, at the time of their sealing. When it was made known to us, through the angelic exploration, that there did exist such a class in the world of spirits, — that they were capable of becoming citizens of heavenly communities, and that they were designated and reserved by the Lord for this purpose.

We now behold them, therefore, after the sealing has taken effect. We behold them no longer surrounded by and mingled with adverse elements; but separated and arranged and organized by themselves. They

have been not only gathered out of those mingled multitudes into the New Church, formed by the angels in the intermediate world, but having been instructed there by angels for a sufficient period of time, have been at length raised up to their destined places in the heavenly regions, and are now seen, in company with their Saviour, — their Divine Lord and Master, on the heavenly mountain, settled in their abodes in the spiritual Canaan, from whence they are to go no more out, but where they are to remain, in living conjunction with Him, to eternity.

In other words, we here have a description of the formation and appearance of that "New Heaven," which the Lord promised to form at His Second Advent, to which a number of the prophets distinctly refer, and which we have so frequently mentioned in these Discourses.

We have said that these redeemed and purified ones, of whom that New Heaven is composed, ascended thither out of that New Church formed by angels in the world of spirits. And this continues to be the case. From the first day of its organization that heaven has been receiving accessions. At first its numbers were comparatively few, but they have been constantly increasing ever since. When the good there were first separated from the wicked, some of them were much more nearly prepared to enter heaven than others, and so were taken up at an earlier period. And this occurred with every degree of variety. So, too, good spirits departing from the earth, began at once to enter that church, and to receive there instruction and preparation. So that a constant tide of emigration, so to speak, from the

earth, has been entering that heaven from the day of its formation until now, and will continue thus to flow in — and in increasing volume — forever. “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make, shall remain before me, saith Jehovah, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come and worship before me, saith Jehovah.”

And as the population of that New Heaven extends, its power and its influence extend. It is capable of doing more good than formerly. It is capable of acting upon the world of spirits more powerfully, and also capable of acting upon the world of men more powerfully. We feel its influences to-day. And we see in the world around us, and have seen, in an increasing ratio, for the last hundred years, the evidences of its influences upon the moral and civil life of Christendom. It is the cause of all the progress in human affairs which we have witnessed as so marked within this period, and which we all feel and see to be so largely on the increase. And it will be the cause, or rather the medium from the Lord, through which still greater light, and still greater progress will flow into the minds of men, until those vast changes of goodness and peace, so often dwelt upon, and so glowingly set forth in the prophets, shall have been reached and realized upon the earth.

It is in this connection that the words of the text occur. The apostle then continues: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on

the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The "gospel" here meant is the gospel of the Second Advent; and it is called the *everlasting* gospel, because the church and dispensation, formed under it, are never to pass away, but are to be perpetual, as so frequently declared in Scripture. For we read that the new heavens and the new earth which Jehovah will make, shall *remain* before him; and by the "new earth" is signified the new church corresponding to the new heaven.

And, in the prophet Daniel, where the Second Advent of the Lord, and the Judgment, and the latter day fulfilment of prophecy, are depicted, we read that, in those days, the Lord of heaven shall set up a kingdom, or church, which shall endure forever;—that "His dominion, which He now establishes, is the dominion of an Age, or dispensation, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed."

Such perpetuity or permanency of endurance is never predicated of the church and dispensation introduced through the agency of our Lord's Apostles. They were never told that it would endure forever; on the contrary, it was predicted by Peter that "a great falling away" should take place in that church. The gospel they were sent out into the world to preach, is never called the "*everlasting* gospel."

Not that the things then revealed and taught, were not true. Very far from that. But that the Revelation of heavenly truth was not then complete. The world did not then receive the sum total; more was to come. Further important particulars were to be given in the fulness of times; not "*another* gospel,"

in the sense meant by Paul, but a further disclosure from the interior contents of the *same*; and to this latter-day dispensation, of still greater light and illustration, they were constantly directed to look; as it is expressed by Paul, in the words already quoted, — “We (the apostles of this age, now,) know only in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

This everlasting gospel of the Lord's Second Advent, is described here, in connection with the formation of the New Heaven, to signify that such is the gospel preached in that Heaven, and that from that Heaven it will descend, first to the world of spirits, being promulgated by angels there, and then to the world of men, to be preached and promulgated here; and that the influences proceeding from that Heaven, will be constantly given to the dissemination of these truths, and to inducing the human mind to receive them.

We have now examined the contents of two chapters, the twelfth and fourteenth. And, in so doing, we have observed the final effects of the judgment, upon one of the two separated bodies. We have followed the progress of the good in their ascent to a higher and better world, until we have seen them elevated and settled in their homes in heaven.

We are now to turn in an opposite direction. The contents of five other chapters are before us, the thirteenth, and fifteenth, to the eighteenth, inclusive; and, in them, we contemplate the final effects of the

same judgment upon the other body of spirits, — upon the unregenerate and sinful. On this side,* we find described the defeat of the dragon, the overthrow of his hosts, and the fall of the great Babylon of the world of spirits. But, although the particulars mentioned are numerous, yet the whole may be summed in a single idea, and by a single phrase, and that is, the Destruction of the Wicked. We here behold them on their way to perdition. The qualities which possess them, and which are the cause of their ruin, are vividly portrayed. Those qualities are here revealed to us in their inmost characters, and given in connection with the results to which they lead. The evil gathered from the nominally Christianized countries — both Protestant and Catholic — are what are described, and we read until we behold them all removed from the world of spirits, and cast down into the hells below, signified by the “bottomless pit.” Since that day, the intermediate world of spirits has been free from their presence, — as permanent residents.

The seven vials of wrath, filled with the seven last plagues, are nothing else than symbols and descriptions of the effects of human passions and lusts, — the curses, the disorders, the hardships, the sufferings, the torments and the social chaos, which the unrestrained propensities of the human heart produce in any community where they prevail, and especially in those great communities of separated and condemned spirits of which we have here been reading.

In the description, the work of inflicting these

* Including part of chapter 12.

plagues, is attributed to the angels. The plagues are said to have been contained in golden vials, which were put into the hands of angels, and by them poured out upon the doomed populations below. So the dragon is represented as being overthrown and thrust down into the bottomless pit, by Michael and his angels. And the two witnesses, in the eleventh chapter, are said to have been gifted with the power of inflicting upon mankind *all plagues* as often as they will, and are also described as sending forth *fire* out of their mouths, consuming those who persecuted them. This is the common mode of representation used in Scripture. The sufferings which overtake the wicked, are almost always spoken of as being inflicted upon them from above, — as flowing down upon them out of heaven. But this is only according to the appearance. This form of speaking is employed because the flowing down of heavenly influences are the occasion of manifesting and bringing to light the hidden corruption of the wicked ; as the sunshine, which usually vivifies and improves all nature, when it falls upon rotting substances, only hastens the process of decay. The *fire* proceeding out of the mouth of the witnesses, denotes the blaze of evil passion or zeal aroused in the minds of the evil when, in the spiritual world, they hear the truth proclaimed. And the death which is said to ensue to them, is the spiritual death which persistent opposition to the truth occasions to the soul.

So the seven last plagues are said to have been poured out of golden vials, in the hands of angels, because, as we have already seen, the different processes of the Judgment have been conducted by the angels.

It was through their agency that the truths were proclaimed, in the sounding of the seven trumpets, and the truths are what declare, detect, and expose the evil desires and corrupt propensities of the wicked, laying them bare to the sight.

But there is another very important way in which the preaching of the truths by the angels, had affected that vast multitude of unclean spirits in a most unfavorable manner. As we have already seen, that preaching had served to select out and separate from among them, all the good and well disposed spirits who had formerly dwelt among them. And it was this circumstance, added to the powerful promulgation of the truth, that had destroyed the bonds which held their society together, which had stirred it up from its very depths, and utterly overturned it, by simply delivering up to the insane persuasions of their own passions and lusts, the wicked characters who remained.

Thus the Lord does not actively and affirmatively inflict any torments. Far from it; for He is uniformly merciful. Nor do the angels willingly afflict any. They do nothing whatever for the purpose of adding to the miseries of the wicked. They take care only to save, and protect, and defend the good, — all who are willing to be saved spiritually, leaving the evil simply in freedom, to go by themselves and to behave as they please.

So far from inventing means to increase their disorders, the ministrations of the Lord through the angels, are all directed to allay, or to modify and diminish the fury and malignity with which they not unfrequently annoy and torment one another.

The hell of the wicked in the other life, consists wholly and altogether in merely being delivered up, in answer to their own desire, — in answer to their own choice and prayer, to the bent of their own unsubdued propensities.

How would it be here in the world of men, if a similar experiment were tried? Remove, in any community the external bonds which hold society together, and what would be the result? Select out from the nation all those whose conduct is ruled by the principles of righteousness and justice, — all who obey the laws of moral probity from heartfelt conviction, from their own free will, independent of the pressure of public opinion, or the restraints of the civil power, and remove them to a distance. Then withdraw the civil laws which now serve to restrain and hold in check the selfish desires and designs of the multitude, the laws which forbid theft, and adultery, and perjury, and murder, and it is not difficult to see, without a very vivid imagination, some few of the results which would follow. We can think how disorders of every kind would break out and abound, how things would grow from bad to worse, until anarchy would set in, all traces of civilization would rapidly disappear, one widespread contention would be witnessed for dominion and power, for the property and goods of others, and for the means of selfish gratification or pleasure, until society would crumble to pieces, while social chaos and the world's night of darkness would return.

Imagine, if you can, the probable state of things in times like those, in some of the great centres of the world's life, like London, or Paris, or New York!

Would they not, under the conditions we have described, present, to the contemplations of the truly rational and Christianized mind, a full picture of places upon which the seven vials of wrath had been poured out? Should we not behold the “unquenchable fires” burning in every individual heart, and flaming forth in every individual life? And should we not behold human society there, bleeding and suffering under the woes, and distresses, and grievous torments that are here prophetically depicted under the symbolism of the seven vials? This is so obvious to the reason, that we presume none will doubt it. And all this, too, in countries which are nominally Christian.

But in the merciful providence of the Lord, human communities are seldom brought to the test of so severe a trial. Only at long intervals, and then only for short periods, is anarchy allowed to prevail, that we may have the lesson of beholding what is really in man, when left to himself. And we can see that it is not necessary to cast in any other ingredients than those found in corrupt and perverted human hearts, in order to constitute a hell.

If these things would be true of a community of men, situated in the natural world, how much truer must they be of the spiritual world, where all the mental laws work in greater freedom, and come to their full head and operation without impediment. What a melancholy picture of disorder and woe is given in these five chapters, where the last state of the wicked, when left to themselves, is described! No! not a particle need to be added from Divine wrath—for there is no such thing as Divine wrath—nothing added from the vindictive justice of the

angels, — for there is nothing of the kind ; nor even any pangs of a disturbed conscience, — for there is no such thing as *conscience* left there, all remnants of such a restraining principle have been blotted out of the mind before the spirit has sunken to those depths, having been first, as the prophet expresses it, “seared, as if with a red-hot iron,” and finally drowned and buried deep down in a grave of false persuasion and unrepented lust. No ; nothing is done to the evil but simply to separate them from among the good.

No reader of the Book of Revelation can have failed to notice the frequency with which *beasts* of various descriptions figure in its symbolical representations. We have already had occasion to refer to some of the animals. At the beginning, we read of the *four beasts* which the Apostle saw in heaven, then of the *horses* going forth from the Book, frequently of the *Lamb* representing our Saviour as to His Humanity ; and here, in these seven chapters, of four other beasts, — the dragon, which persecuted the woman, the beast which came up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, the second beast, which came up out of the earth, and, lastly, the scarlet beast, upon which the great harlot was seen sitting.

As we have before had occasion to observe, these animated forms are all types or emblems of things in the human mind. For the most part, they represent man as to his affections ; and, as may be clearly gleaned from the descriptions, sometimes typify them in an orderly or holy state of development, and at others, in a most perverted, disorderly, and unholy state.

The four beasts first seen, are thus described by the Apostle. "And round about the throne were four beasts, full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle." These four beasts reappear constantly throughout the Book, in connection with the scenes which are laid in heaven. Indeed, they represent heaven. They are intended to typify or embody, and so represent, all heavenly or holy affection. They are emblems of the pure and orderly affections which move and animate the angels, leading them into that high and holy fellowship, and inspiring them with a love for all their duties.

As soon as we know this their meaning, we can see the reason of the things which are attributed to them. It is said that they rest not day and night, crying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. They are represented as taking an active part throughout in the occurrences described in this Book; they are said, repeatedly, to join in the worship and glorification of the Lord. When the four horses went forth from the Book, as each successive seal was opened, "one of the four beasts said, come and see; and when the seven last plagues were to be manifested, we read, "And one of the *four beasts* gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, that liveth forever and ever."

This constant reference to these four beasts is to signify the entrance of heavenly affections into all these movements. They are the same four beasts that so frequently occur in different parts of Scripture, appearing first on the standards of the Israelitish host,

as they marched and encamped, according to their four grand divisions, in the wilderness. Judah, with the lion on its standard, occupied the east; Reuben, with the man, was in the south; Ephraim, with the ox or calf, on the west; and Dan, with the eagle, on the north. This form of encampment also represented heaven, as to its four quarters. The figures of these animals are also called cherubs or cherubim; though cherubs were most commonly composed of a combination of parts of each of the four in one figure. In Ezekiel, they are described in connection with the Word or Sacred Scriptures, as in that are embodied, or expressed and described, all heavenly and holy affections; and they are there called "living creatures," for such affections are really and truly alive, having the breath of genuine spiritual life constantly breathed into them by the Lord from above.

But the four beasts described in these last chapters stand over against those cherubic ones in marked contrast. There is no difficulty in perceiving that they are types of evil. They embody and represent human affection, perverted and disordered to a most painful degree. Their shapes are monstrous in the extreme, being unlike any forms known in nature, or ever seen in visible shape in the world of men. Each one of them symbolizes the dominant disposition, — the ruling *animus*, — of some great class of evil men, now spirits, or, of evil spirits, who were once men; dispositions, which they fed and nourished while in the body, and which they carried with them when they went to the spiritual world. As the four good beasts were formerly displayed upon the standards of the Lord's representative host, so these monstrous shapes, depicted here by

the prophet, may be regarded as the symbolic and truly corespondential devices appearing upon the standards of the combined hosts of the Devil and his angels, in all their grand divisions. The *dragon*, the *serpent*, *Satan*, the *Devil*, the *beast*, etc., are only so many collective names given to the great kingdom of Evil, each one, however, expressive and descriptive of some particular quality, by which it is characterized or distinguished.

Did time allow, we could describe the character of each of the qualities that are here symbolized. But this is not required. They can all be studied in the Writings of the Church. It is enough at present to know that they represent wrong principles of life, principles which oppose and war against heaven and the church, — principles which in their inmost nature are direfully and fearfully evil, and lead to the most disastrous results, both in the present life and in the world to come.

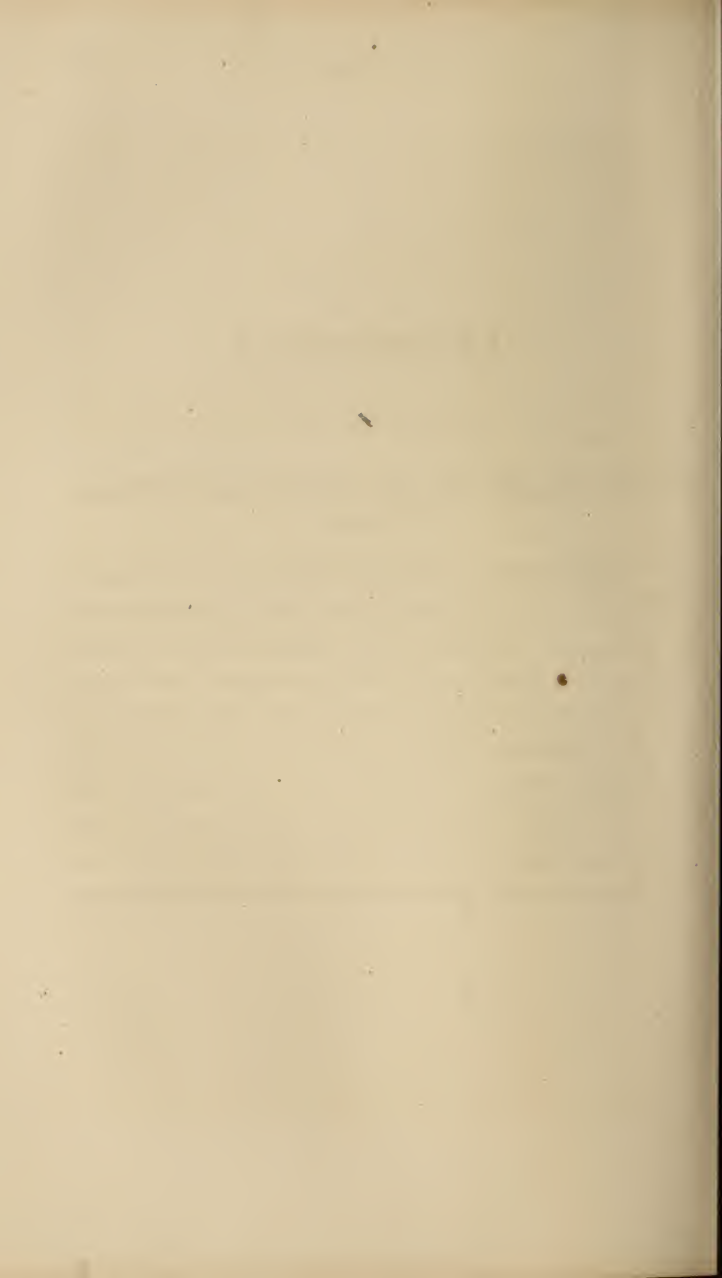
But what a lesson to us do these sad pictures convey! What is the reason, do you suppose, that these scenes are made to occupy so much space? Why is the description of these terrible things which overtake the wicked, so much more full and minute than those happy things, which are the portion of the good? It must be, because it is so important for all to know them. It must be, to show us in strong and clear light that there is a *hell* to be saved from, as well as a heaven to be labored for and attained; — a hell of dreadful character, and unspeakable misery. Here are unfolded the principles which make it, the evil tendencies which, unresisted and unrestrained, lead directly into it. Those tendencies we find at work in

the world, in every society of men, — in ourselves, — in our own hearts. And these disclosures are given us, that henceforth we may avoid and shun them, putting them away to a distance, and laying hold of that great salvation that is opened to us in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, by a life according to His Commandments. Thus acting like one portion of those of whom we read, when it is said, — “And the remnant were affrighted at these things, and gave glory unto the God of heaven.” And so let it induce us to give the glory unto Him, by living a life according to His Precepts.

LECTURE IX.

THE CLOSING OF THE APOSTOLICAL DISPENSATION.

CONTENTS:—CHAPTERS NINETEEN AND TWENTY; THE HEAVENLY GLORIFICATIONS AT THE EXECUTION OF THE JUDGMENT; THE STUPEFYING EFFECTS OF THE PREVIOUS STATE OF THINGS, ON THE MINDS OF MEN; THE CLOSING OF THE FIRST CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION, AND THE OPENING OF A NEW ONE; EXPLANATION OF DANIEL'S IMAGE; THE SPIRITUAL HISTORY OF MAN UNTIL THE JUDGMENT; THE NEW ORDER THEN INTRODUCED; EXPLANATION OF THE WHITE HORSE AND HIS RIDER; THE COMPLETION OF THE JUDGMENT UPON THE GENTILES, —BEYOND CHRISTENDOM.



LECTURE.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” — *Rev. xix. 7.*

In these two chapters, the nineteenth and twentieth, we study the Closing of the Dispensation, the “end” of the first Christian Period, and the winding up of its affairs.

We have followed the revelation of new Truth which constitutes the second coming of the Lord, and witnessed the effects it produced upon the mixed, good and evil populations in the intermediate world of the departed, gathered there from the nominally Christian countries. We have contemplated the Judgment in its successive stages; seen the New Heaven formed by the calling forth and preparation of the good; and beheld the separation of the evil, with their final delivery over into the realms of perdition.

In these two chapters we have a brief summary statement of these same things, as facts accomplished, together with the closing act of Judgment upon the populations not hitherto included,—the Gentile world, outside of Christendom,—to whom the gospel of our Lord—in their earth-life—had not reached. The entire scene is laid still, and altogether, in the

world of the departed. We read, first, of the glorifications and rejoicings in the heavens on account of the accomplishment of these things ; then, of the effect which these things are to have upon that part of the world of spirits connected with Christendom ; and, lastly, of their effect upon that part of the world of spirits connected with the countries beyond Christendom.

Let us attend to these things successively in some degree of detail.

The nineteenth chapter opens with a description of the joyful praises of the angels on account of the accomplishment of the Judgment. This fact is stated with great clearness and particularity, and is one worthy of serious attention, for it is highly instructive. The casting down of those falsely constituted communities and their removal from the world of spirits, was the occasion of the fullest satisfaction and most unbounded joy throughout the heavenly world. They broke forth into singing above and below. Their hearts being filled with the most delightful emotions of love and gratitude, we hear the loudest acclamations of thanksgiving and praise rising up and resounding from every side. Three distinct anthems are here recorded as being sung in succession, by different choirs in that unnumbered assembly of the redeemed. The strains are heard to roll along from one vast multitude to another. The swelling voice of the adorations bursts forth in one region of the great expanse, and then is responded to by some mighty chorus, situated far away in another. The acclamations, beginning in the lower portions of heaven, rise gradually through the higher, up to the throne itself,

and then return, floating down from thence, to the great multitudes constituting the lower confines of that holy and happy world. Thus the Apostle witnessed celebrations taking place in all three of the heavens, — the lowest or first, in the second or middle, and the third or highest. While the anthem sung in each one is here recorded.

From these demonstrations, so extraordinary in their nature, and made on so vast a scale, we may see that a great event is indicated; some accomplishment, having an important bearing on the interests of the whole spiritual world, as well as on those of the world of men. While both the importance and the magnitude of the event will constantly grow upon our vision, becoming enlarged as we continue to study its character and its relations.

Hundreds and hundreds of millions of men, yes, multitudes so vast that all attempts to estimate their numbers would be useless, had been accumulating in the intermediate world of the departed, for more than seventeen hundred years. And he who looks over the history of the nominally Christian countries for that period, will have no difficulty in understanding that among those millions the evil greatly predominated over the good. The evil ruled in those communities, — the *tares* grew up to great height and overshadowed the wheat.

Here, in the world of men, the career of a powerful mind is limited. A Charlemagne, a Hildebrand, a Napoleon, stands before his fellow-men, exercising the sway which his mental powers put into his hand, for twenty-five, perhaps for thirty years or so, and then passes away, leaving his functions and position to be

occupied by others. And so, too, whole generations pass constantly from the stage of action, giving way to the new ones coming forward, involving continual changes in the world's affairs, in the schemes of men, and in the influences that are operating in society.

But in the world of spirits, before the Last Judgment, circumstances were somewhat different in this respect. There, when men arrived, they did not pass off in twenty-five or thirty years, but remained, as we have seen, one — two — three — *five* hundred years; and in some cases, a thousand or more. Hence the career of a man, of a generation of men, did not come to an end, but went on, their force accumulating and their power extending. This led to very injurious and unhappy results; for, as we have seen, the dominion was in the hands of the evil. Those communities were constituted and ruled according to the maxims of selfishness, and power, and policy, — maxims current in the world of ungodly men, — and not by the precepts of love, justice, and mercy, which are the laws of the heavenly kingdom.

Hence, every one departing from this world by death, and entering the world of spirits, came at once into a bad atmosphere, and was thrown into a current of corrupt influences. Unless he was well grounded in the principles of a true life, he was inevitably carried away by the example and operation and strong persuasion of immense numbers. The leaders and rulers of those communities made use of the successive ages to consolidate and strengthen and extend their power. They gained a constant accession of adherents, filling the contiguous regions of that world with their inhabitants, and then annexing them to their

dominions. Thus had designing leaders of the Roman Catholic Religion wrought there, from age to age, until they had organized and built up there a Power, which is described in the Revelation as the Great Babylon, sitting upon many waters, and ruling over the kings of the earth. While other designing men, from the north of Europe, had done a very similar thing among the populations flocking in there from the Protestant nations,—holding their court and centralizing their power in what is called “the Seat of the Beast,” or the “Place” of “the Dragon.”

In addition to the destructive influences which these “principalities and powers” of the intermediate world shed upon the concourse of spirits departing from our earth, their operation was also extremely deleterious upon men still in the body. They were in the regions of the spiritual world nearest to men. They were in close contact with the interiors of their minds. They could affect and influence their minds in a thousand ways, imperceptibly, and while the recipients were entirely unconscious of the source from whence those things came. They had risen up to a high altitude in the world of spirits, and the atmosphere they shed forth flowed over and around the brains and internal senses of men, forcing them to breathe it, and thus to draw in some of its darkening and stupefying effects.* The Apostle Peter informs us that even in his day, this spirit of iniquity had already begun to work; “the man of sin,” whom the Lord should destroy by the breath of His second coming; while Paul, somewhat more distinct, speaking

* See note C, at the end of the Volume.

not only for his own age, but also for the church in the centuries to come after him, says to the Ephesians, — “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places.” (Eph. vi. 12.) In the later ages, they had indeed risen up to and taken possession of and occupied a region so high as to interfere with the descent of heavenly influences. They had interposed themselves between the world in which angels live, and the world in which men live, hanging there like a dark and dense cloud, turning aside and shedding off the spiritual sunshine in its descent, and intercepting, as much as possible, all intercourse between the two worlds. The church on earth was spiritually blockaded. The larger portion of those interior avenues by which divine and heavenly influences are meant to flow down into the human soul, illustrating it with spiritual light, and warming it with spiritual love and animation, were closed up, had been seized hold of indeed, and were in possession of the enemy.

The advancement of the church in religious life, — in purity and holiness, — was brought to a stand; while the moral progress of the world was arrested.

Men who lived in that age, viz: in the first quarter or first half of the last century, felt that it was so. All the history of that period is full of the depravity which prevailed, and of the gloom which filled the minds of the good on account of it. Moralists mourn over the corruption of manners and the widespread dissoluteness of the times, while the best spirits in the church saw and lamented its declension, its spiritual deadness, and its powerlessness for good. It

was this dark and depressing state of things, clearly perceived and keenly felt, that roused the religious enthusiasm of such men as Whitefield, the two Wesleys, and Jonathan Edwards, and sent them forth into the field as preachers of a "Revival," to bring about a better, more hopeful condition of Religious life and practice.

Thus, the darkness of the middle age threatened to return. The cause of humanity and Christian civilization was in danger of being morally lost. And this retrograde, downward movement could not have been arrested, if those evil communities in the world of spirits had been allowed to remain there, and continue their operations.

Our Lord, in Matthew, speaking of the spiritual state of that time, says, — "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but, for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened." Hence we see the great necessity there existed for a Judgment, that those days might be shortened, and brought to an end. We see the importance of the event in a spiritual point of view, — its importance to the interests of the Lord's kingdom, in the world of men, in the world of spirits, and in the heaven of angels. We discover here the ground of those great rejoicings in the heavens, and of that constant language which we read throughout this Book, expressing the gratitude and thankfulness of the angels, that the Lord is taking to Himself His great power, and beginning to reign, that the hour of His Judgment is come, and the time

of the dead, that they should be judged, and that "the accuser of their brethren is cast down, which accused them day and night before God."

This, indeed, is the final "consummation" or "end," looked forward to, and pointed out, in so much Divine Prophecy. The "end," not "of the world," as an improper translation of the phrase would make it appear; the end, — not of these visible heavens, or this habitable globe; the end, — not of the historical development of humanity, nor of the successive generations of men on this planet; but the "end" of that injurious and destructive state of things in the spiritual world, which brought about the "consummation" of the first great Christian "Age," the closing of the Apostolical Dispensation, "the winding up" of that grand system of preliminary "economies," which prepared the times and opened the way for the latter-day glory of the church, — that clearer Dispensation of light and life, denominated, in Daniel, the Kingdom that shall have no "end," and in the Revelation, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.

Daniel saw, in holy vision, this same consummation upon those evil populations; he saw until "the judgment was set, and the books were opened." He saw, also, the evil "beast," which rose up to such great power, making war on the saints of the Most High; "But," he says, "the judgment shall sit, and they shall *take away* his dominion, to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all

dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter." *Hitherto is the end of the matter* ; to this conclusion does the sum of all prophecy constantly point ; — to the casting down of the evil "principalities and powers" in the intermediate world, and the consequent initiation and instalment of the latter-day kingdom.

The same, also, is represented by the great Image seen in a dream by the king of Babylon, and explained according to a literal application by Daniel. It is there applied to worldly kingdoms, but Daniel's veiled explanation given to the king, is itself prophetic, involving a spiritual meaning. Under the figure of successive earthly kingdoms, are described the successive dispensations of the Lord's kingdom on earth, as may be clearly seen in that it runs to the same conclusion or "end" of which we have been speaking.

That Image, as we read, had a head of gold, a breast and arms of silver, a belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet partly of iron and partly of clay. This Image is a representative of Man ; — of man, in his solidarity, or unity, as a race ; — of man, in his spiritual development, according to the history of the past ; — of man, in his relations to the Lord's kingdom, from the beginning until now ; — an image, therefore, of the History of the Church Universal, from the creation of Adam, down to the "end" of the preparatory dispensations, — down to the final judgment of "Babylon" and "the Beast," which we have been studying in the Book of Revelation.

The different *metals* are symbolical of the different *ages* through which mankind has passed ; a symbolism

quite familiar to the thought and literature of oriental and ancient times. Here are, in succession, given in figure, the "golden age," the "silver age," the "brazen" or "copper age," the "iron age," and lastly, a shorter age, partly iron, and partly "clay."

As we have said, these are the different "ages" of Man, in respect to his relations to the Church, or Lord's kingdom; and therefore, mark so many successive dispensations, or churches, or Periods of Divine, Providential economy, with respect to the church.

The head of gold, a sign of the golden age, typifies the most Ancient Church, the Period extending from Adam to Noah, the antediluvian part of the world's history. It has been called, almost universally, by tradition, "the golden age," because then there was greater simplicity of life and manners. Men lived more in the emotions than in the later ages, and the goodness which then belonged to the church was more spontaneous, fuller of innocence, and more heavenly, than that which came in afterwards.

But the men of that age fell away. There had been a constant decline from the days of the Adamic age downward; at length the corruption became complete, the world prevailed over the church, the church, as it had till then existed, was swept away, and the event described as the Deluge, brought that Age and Dispensation to an end.

Next came the "Silver Age." From Noah to the days of Heber, a different state of things existed. Men had become less emotional and more intellectual in their character. New elements of manhood were called into play, and civilizations of a different order

from those existing before, were built up. Men separated into distinct nations; there was no longer, "one language and one speech;" ideas of political power and empire were developed, while civil law became a force, and the bond which held society together. Men, however, so far as they still listened to the things of the church, were still spiritual in their genius; being so near the primitive Revelation, and ignorant of many modern corruptions, their good men were interior men in their perceptions, and highly intelligent in the principles of divine and heavenly things. In its later days, when the sacred Books of its earlier time were lost, that church was instructed by such men as Job, and Jethro, and Melchizedek, who kept the lamp of the church trimmed, and the holy flame burning, amidst the surrounding darkness of an otherwise declining and demoralized age. It was an age, as respects the church, rather of the study, the contemplation, and the teaching of spiritual truth, — than the spontaneous practice of benevolent goodness, and hence its name, the "silver" age, meaning thereby the Age of Spiritual Truth.

But that church gradually died out; by degrees the oriental peoples, among whom it existed, sank into idolatry, or mythological superstitions of various kinds, and it became necessary to prepare for a new order of things. We then behold the call of Abraham. And when the Law was promulgated from Mt. Sinai, and the Jewish church was established through the instrumentality of Moses, a new Dispensation commenced. This was the brazen or copper age. An age, that is, of merely natural goodness. Men were not so intelligent in spiritual, supernatural, and

invisible things, as they had been in former ages. They had forgotten more of the spiritual truths of the primitive revelation. The quality of the Jewish church-life, was that of simple obedience to an externally imposed law, — moral and ceremonial, — and whose inducements consisted principally of a system of temporal rewards and punishments. Their goodness, therefore, as we have already said, so far as they possessed any, was natural, rather than spiritual; and the general life of the surrounding world, was of a similar type, flowing along on the same plane. The *brazen* serpent was elevated in the wilderness, as the type of healing, which, while it pointed forward to our Lord, through whom redemption was to come, at the same time symbolized and set forth the character of the religious life which then prevailed. The laver, too, placed in the outer court for washing, emblematic of the purifications of that church, was of *brass*; while the altar of burnt offering, significative of their religious love or affection, was overlaid with *brass*, and all the utensils employed in connection with it were of the same metal. The molten sea was of *brass*, resting upon twelve *brazen* oxen, typifying the natural affections, and the galleries of the Temple, in which Jehovah was worshipped, rested upon colonades of *brazen* pillars, of great magnitude, and curious workmanship.

But when our Lord appeared in the world, the *brazen* Age was brought to an end. He introduced a new Dispensation. He revealed more truth. He taught a new and clearer system of Doctrines. He fulfilled the letter of the Word. For this reason that Dispensation is called the Age of *Iron*. That is, the age when literal truth is at its full. In that Age, the

letter of the Bible was completed. There is to be no more Sacred Scripture given. And this completed letter of the Word, is the "rod of iron" by which the Lord "will rule all nations," influencing them by the power of His truth. Or, as another translation gives it, — "the crook of iron," with which "He will shepherdize all nations," separating the sheep from the goats, drawing all who are willing to be drawn into His fold, and defending them from evil after they have entered it.

The first Christian or Apostolic church is founded upon the letter of the Word, in its obvious, natural sense, unenlightened, and not illustrated by its spiritual meaning. Its dispensation, therefore, is the Age of divine natural Truth, or divine truth natural, represented by the legs of *iron* in the Image.

The feet, partly of clay and partly of iron, are emblematic of its later and closing centuries, when the Apostolical Doctrines were no longer retained pure, but when a number of differing systems grew up in Christendom, and when the pure truth of the original gospel had become mixed with many things of a corrupt and earthly nature. As it is said in Daniel, — "they shall mix themselves with the seed of man, and the iron and the clay shall not cohere together. "So these various systems of systematic theology, and ecclesiastical polity, are partly genuine, and partly human fallibility. With many gospel truths, which they have taken for a basis, they have mixed many things drawn from the ingenuity and persuasions of men, which do not well cohere with those truths. Thus, by the introduction of many hurtful fallacies, they have diminished the force of the letter of Scrip-

ture, and given to the church an insecure and unstable foundation on which to stand.

This is now seen fulfilled in the circumstances of our time. For so many different things have been drawn forth from the letter of the Scripture, which are not in reality taught there, that men are beginning to distrust the whole thing. Great doubt and perplexity prevail, not only with respect to the proper meaning and interpretation of the Bible, but in regard to its very validity. This is, indeed, the great theological question of the day. The best minds of the church are exercised about it; and the more they think rationally on it, the more they are troubled; thus fulfilling our Lord's words, that there should be great "perplexity," "men's hearts failing them for fear;" "for," he adds, "the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Now the "powers of the heavens," that are known and operative among men, are the *truths of the Divine Word*; and these are "shaken," when discredit is thrown upon them, and they are brought into doubt. And this is done at the same time, and by the same process, that mixes the *iron* with the *clay*, giving revealed Scripture truth a feeble and infirm hold on the rational convictions of men.

How many illustrations of this present state of things might we not cite, did only time and space allow!

But the truth is, all these mixed systems are destined to pass away. This assurance we have, distinctly uttered by the mouth of Divine Prophecy. Daniel said to the king, — "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out (of the Rock) without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and

clay, and brake them to pieces." * * * And they "became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the Stone which smote the image, became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." (*Dan. ii. 34.*)

Now, we know that, in a Supreme Sense, our Lord Himself is the "Stone," and He is called so from the imperishable Truth, which He is, and which He embodies and reveals. So, here, the "stone cut out of the Rock," is new truth, revealed from the Divine Word; the truth we have been endeavoring to explain, the truth of the Spiritual Sense of the Bible, the truth concerning Himself and His Second Advent. In other words, this "Stone" is the Lord, in His Second Advent.

The "Stone" is said to have been "cut out without hands,"—a remarkable and significant expression,—to denote that this Doctrine is a matter of Revelation, that it comes wholly and altogether from the Divine Word, and is not the result of the reasoning ability or of any intellectual ingenuity of man. In this, it stands in marked contrast to the iron and the clay. And it is this quality which gives it its power of endurance, becoming, as it does, the instrument in the hands of the Lord, by which His everlasting earthly kingdom is to be established. The kingdom which, as we read, is to "consume all those kingdoms;" that is, a Dispensation which is now to follow and supersede all those dispensations which we have thus briefly sketched, and which the metallic "Image," in prophetic language, described.

It is this change of the Dispensations, — the closing up of the foregoing ages, and the commencement of the new and last one, — which we study here in this nineteenth chapter of Revelation; and which, as we have seen, is the ground of the heavenly rejoicings.

We are next to follow the effects of this change.

We read immediately after this that heaven was opened, and that the Lord is seen, appearing as “the Word of God,” seated upon a white horse, accompanied by the armies of heaven, or the angelic hosts, likewise seated upon white horses, going forth in righteousness and in faithfulness to judge and make war.

This describes the state of things which followed in the world of spirits, immediately after those mixed communities had been broken up, and the wicked among them cast down. That intermediate world, so far as connected with Christendom, was emptied of its former inhabitants. They had all been removed to other regions of the spiritual universe. None of those bad “principalities and powers, — none of those “wicked spirits in high places,” — ruled there any longer, spreading their moral miasma around. The atmosphere of that world had been purified by the great “Crisis” which had happened, as a violent thunder-storm clears the material atmosphere in this. No noxious influences, strongly persuasive to evil, now met the departing spirit entering that world from this. Hence we read, — “Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord from henceforth.” That dark cloud which had hung between the heaven of angels and the world of men, was rolled away. The influences,

which had poured in upon the human mind, stupefying it as to spiritual things, and stimulating its evil fires, were withdrawn, and all the avenues, through which the souls of men are interiorly reached by divine and heavenly influences, were reopened, and rendered passable and available. Nothing, now, existed there, impeding or interfering with the descent of spiritual sunshine, or the flowing down of heavenly and divine operations.

Hence, as we see, this change signalized a new epoch in the history of the spiritual world; a new Era dawned then upon the populations, both of that world, and of this world; a new spiritual Age commenced, an age of greater liberty and light, an age of purer and better influences, an age of enlargement and progress for the whole family of man.

In this vision concerning the white horse, we see the Lord and His angels availing themselves of this changed condition of the world of spirits to flow down thither and commence their beneficent operations. We see the heaven above opened, and the heavenly influences beginning to descend. We here behold the commencement of the New Dispensation authoritatively, and, as it were, officially announced. We behold the Lord in person, with an array of the heavenly host around him,—assembled for the purpose of inaugurating the new spiritual order of things. His riding upon a white horse, as we have before explained, is emblematic of the fact that He now comes to communicate to men a better understanding of His Word, to illustrate their minds more clearly, rationally, and fully, with the light of spiritual truth, and that He can do this now more effectually by the

operations of His spirit, than He could before the impediments in the intermediate world were removed.

The armies of heaven, following Him, also, upon white horses, shows that the angels understand the "Word of God" in its spiritual sense or meaning, and that they will henceforward coöperate with the Lord in his endeavors to illustrate men, and have them receive it. Thus is the "marriage of the Lamb" effected; a new and closer conjunction established, in spiritual ways, between the Lord in the heavens and His church on the earth.

The invitation next given, proceeding from the Angel standing in the sun, addressed to the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, calling them "unto the supper of the great God," is the call now made by the Lord in His Second Advent, through His Word, clothed in the correspondential symbolism of the prophetic tongue, addressed to all men capable of rational thought (for "birds flying in the midst of heaven" are rational thoughts, soaring and exploring heavenly things), bidding them to come, and appropriate the things that are now set before them. To "come" and eat of this "great Supper." To come and inquire into these heavenly knowledges, — a call made to men to come and examine these wonderful disclosures now made from the Divine Word; to "come" and feast the reason on these mighty truths, and nourish their intelligence, and build up their souls with the meat of eternal life, by learning the living realities of the Heavenly system of Doctrines, the spiritual state of existence, and the spiritual sense of the Word, and by the practice of these truths in their lives.

The discomfiture of the armies opposing the heavenly host and Him that sat on the horse, by means of the sword which proceeded forth out of His mouth, denotes the final prevalence of this Truth, by the overthrow of error, and its universal acceptance, by the good and well disposed, everywhere, in the natural world and in the spiritual world.

The first effect of the Heavenly demonstrations and influences which we have just contemplated, as they descended into the intermediate world, occupying that portion of it which had been cleared of inhabitants, was, of course, to extend the Judgment, and so to consummate its execution in the realms beyond, reaching the communities of spirits collected from all the other, but unenlightened countries of the world. We read, therefore, as we go forward through the twentieth chapter, until Satan has been entirely cast down and shut up and bound. Until the universal *Hades* has given up the dead that were in it, — the small and the great standing before God, having “the books opened;” that is, having the memories of their earth life explored, to see what the deeds were which they then did, whether they were good or evil. The “Book of Life” is the Bible, according to whose truths all judgment is made. While at last, all the wicked remaining, of every kind and degree, being cast into the lake of fire, that is, into the hell of evil desire, we behold that world, the intermediate world of spirits, in its entire length and breadth, throughout all its regions, cleared at length of every vestige of evil, and of every malarious influence, restored to peace, to purity and repose.

The mighty change, therefore, which has thus been wrought is wrought over the whole world. The benefits flowing from it, though felt first by Christendom, will not accrue to Christendom alone, but will reach by degrees to every people and nation under Heaven. The New Dispensation is for the whole family of man. The nations are no more to be shut up and segregated one from another. The old barriers are to be thrown down, and a common bond of intercourse and brotherhood grow up, uniting all in one great community of interests and of rights; — the most distant lands acknowledging, in some degree, the same great fundamental truths of righteousness and justice; that, as to the primary Law of Religion, love to God and charity to man, there may come to be one Church Universal throughout all the earth; fulfilling our Lord's words, that "there shall be one Fold, and One Shepherd."

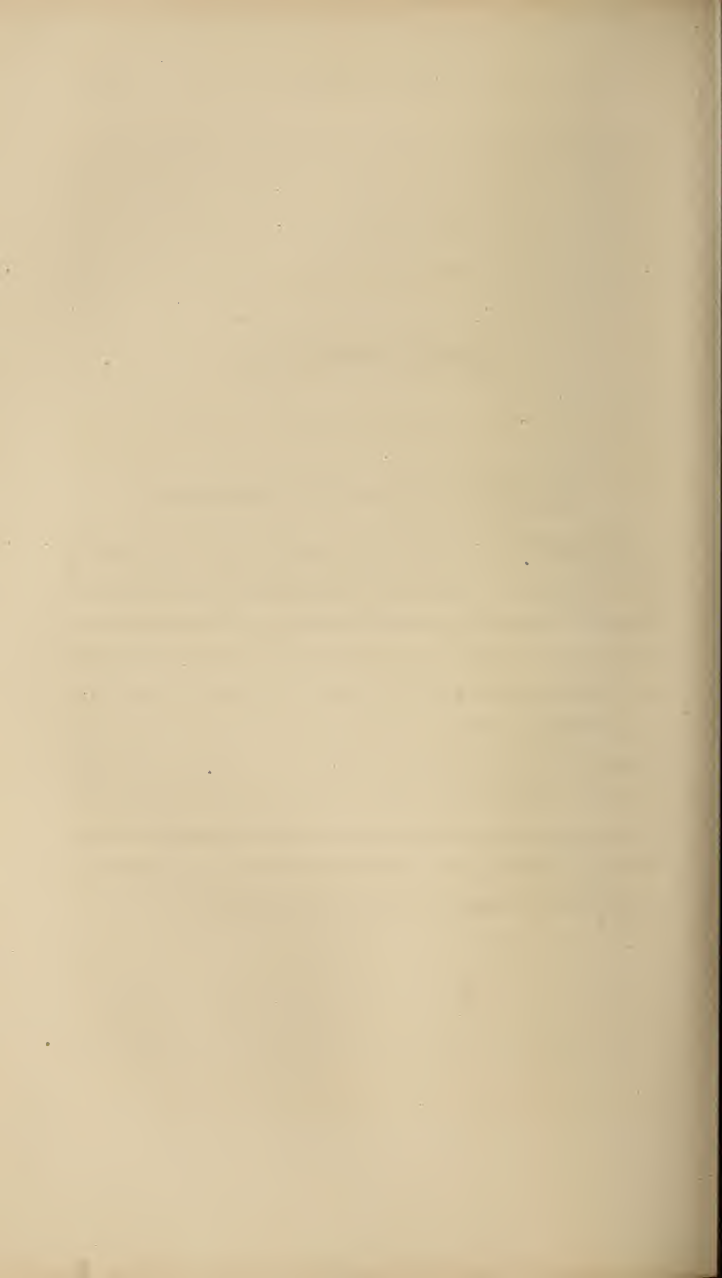
The whole world has felt the mighty impulse of light and progress imparted through the influence of these changes. On every side the manifestations of this New Age have been accumulating around us for the last hundred years.

Hitherto, we have been studying the spiritual causes of this progress, as those causes were developed in the spiritual world. In our next, while considering the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of this Book, it will be our object to treat of the descent of the New Jerusalem, following also some of the effects of this New Dispensation, as they have come down and manifested themselves among men — in the world.

LECTURE X.

DESCENT OF THE NEW JERUSALEM.

CONTENTS:—THE TWENTY-FIRST AND TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTERS; THE NEW JERUSALEM NOT THE HEAVENLY STATE OF EXISTENCE OF THE SAINTS, BUT A NEW CHURCH ON THE EARTH, TEACHING THE HEAVENLY DOCTRINES; HISTORICAL EVIDENCES THAT A NEW AGE HAS ALREADY COMMENCED, AS A VISIBLE EFFECT OF THE JUDGMENT IN THE WORLD OF SPIRITS;—ALL PEOPLES FEEL IT, BUT PRINCIPALLY MANIFEST IN CHRISTENDOM; THE SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS OF MEN TO CONTINUE FOREVER; NO DESTRUCTION OF THE VISIBLE HEAVENS AND HABITABLE GLOBE TO COME; A GLORIOUS FUTURE FOR HUMANITY IN PROSPECT.



LECTURE.

“And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”—*Rev.* xxi. 2 and 5.

Hitherto, in the study of this Book, we have been employed on events in the spiritual world. On events happening out of the sight of men, and beyond the limits of their observation. On events, therefore, which are made known to us only through the channels of Divine Revelation.

This evening, we change our stand-point, or position. We come down to the earth. The scene of operations is transferred from the invisible to the visible world. We are to study events, which, while they are subjects of Divine prophecy, are also matters of human observation and experience; for they occur in the sight of men, finding their places and development in this living, moving, historic world of ours.

We have been occupied with events of great magnitude, and of great importance;—even the rearrangement and reorganization of the mighty multitudes of the world of spirits. We have witnessed the preparations made in the heavens, and in the world of spirits, for a new state of the Church;—

for a new instalment of Divine Truth, for a new Dispensation of light and life, and for a new teaching of Doctrine in the world of men. Thus,—for a new heavenly kingdom on the earth; which shall have no end, and which shall realize for mankind all the precious and glorious promises of ages of prophecy.

By some strange fallacy of reading, which seems to us almost unaccountable the New Jerusalem has been commonly supposed to depict the life after death, or the heavenly state of existence, the state in which the saints will be after the mortal body is laid aside. But there is no foundation for this idea in what is here written. It is true that Paul, in one place, speaks of “the Jerusalem which is above, [and] which is the mother of us all,” but he does not call it the *New Jerusalem*. The Jerusalem which is above, that is, the church in the heavens, is indeed the mother of us all, for its overshadowing influences are upon us all, but it remains to-day where it was, and it will never come down to men; it is nowhere called the *New Jerusalem* in all the sacred Scripture, for it existed in Paul’s day, it is as old as the world is, and will remain where it is, in the presence of God, and out of sight of men, forever..

But the “*New Jerusalem*” is something different from that. It was seen by the Apostle John in prophetic vision, as something then future. It is a church which does not remain out of sight in the spiritual world. It descends. Its work is to be among men. It comes down from God, *out of* heaven, and establishes itself in the world. Its function is, with the help of the heavens, the creation of “*a new earth*, in which dwelleth righteousness.” It is “the tabernacle

of God" — not with departed spirits, but — "with *men*," enabling Him to be present with them more fully than He has been enabled to be under former dispensations; enabling them to become "His people" more fully than they have been enabled to do under former dispensations; and enabling "His servants" to "serve Him" more fully than they have been able to do under former dispensations. A church having a fuller and clearer flow of spiritual truth, "clear as crystal, proceeding forth from the throne of God and of the Lamb."

A church, therefore, whose operations are to be performed in human society : where men may learn its truths and practise its precepts, putting on, by means of them, holiness of life ; where "the nations of them that are saved" may "walk in the light of it;" and where "the kings of the earth" may "bring their glory and their honor into it."

We now proceed to examine the outward manifestation of these events ; to trace the effects which have already begun to flow from these causes ; and to study the fulfilment of the prophecy as it relates to developments which are to take place in our own world.

We have already seen, in our last Discourse, that a result of the Last Judgment in the intermediate world of spirits, was the clearing of that world of its inhabitants. The good had been taken up, and elevated into heaven, while the evil, being removed, had cast themselves down into hell. Thus that world was left, for the time, empty ; its atmosphere clear and pure ; ready, now, for the reception into it of the spirits of the deceased going from this earth ; and, more than

that, ready, also, for the reception and transmission of heavenly influences descending into it from above. This, as we have before observed, was the event which marked the commencement of a new Dispensation, and, in the nineteenth chapter, we beheld the Lord described as descending into that world with His spiritual influences, accompanied by His angels, to commence there a new and more efficient system of operations.

Let us observe, now, therefore, the circumstances into which these changes in the spiritual world bring the men of our world. Let us consider for a moment what new conditions, mentally and spiritually, mankind are placed in by them. What would naturally be the result of these new conditions to us who are still in the body?

Two points will merit our special attention. First, the human mind was, by those changes, restored at once to perfect freedom. Not that the moral freedom of men was ever overthrown or destroyed, — but, it had been greatly impeded and hampered in its operations, by the previous state of things. Those old communities of spirits, as we have seen, surrounding man on every side, invisibly, — in close contact with the interior parts of his mind, constantly infused their thoughts into his understanding, and insinuated their feelings into his will. Thus they held him in a species of bondage. They induced him to think and to feel as they did. They opposed all other influences entering his mind, and maintained in him, as far as they could, the old superstitions and the old order of things. There they hung, like a heavy drag-chain, on the wheels of his moral and intellectual progress.

Their influence was for evil, and not for good ; tending to darken and stupefy the common mind with respect to all the higher classes of subjects. Such was the temper of the times that men were persecuted and silenced, not only for new thoughts in religion, but for new theories in science. Only the most sturdy and determined intellects could throw off the yoke and rise above it.

Now, the removal of those communities from the intermediate world, broke up that state of things. It liberated men from that strong mental bondage in which they had been held, and set them free, to think and to feel as they chose. This is the first point of our observation, with respect to these changes.

The second is, — That, in addition to this restored freedom, the human mind became, from that day forward, the subject and recipient of those new and powerful influences descending into that world from the Lord, out of heaven. This is a most important fact. For, whereas, mankind had before been in close contact with, and surrounded invisibly by evil influences, they now became at once surrounded by good influences in their stead. It was like removing a dense shade from over a garden, and letting in the sunshine upon it. It inaugurated a new period of growth. Instead of darkness, light was now shed into the human understanding ; while alongside the love for what was old, there came to be insinuated a desire also for something new and better.

A little reflection will teach us that these circumstances are important, and calculated to work great changes in human affairs. At first sight, many might be led to imagine that such a fresh outpouring of the

spirit of life from above, must produce good, and only good, continually. But a second thought will serve to correct this impression. With the well disposed, such, indeed, would be the result. But the world's elements are mixed, while the human mind is in freedom. Therefore, with the morally careless and the evil, the results would appear to be evil. The effect is to light up the various fires of the human heart, and set them all burning with an intenser glow; while a superintending Providence is shaping the general flow in a favorable direction.

As already several times remarked, this new order of things commenced just after the middle of the last century. According to Emanuel Swedenborg, who was the seer prepared and appointed by the Lord to witness and report the event, the Judgment was accomplished in the year 1757. He described, from the Word, the changes which then took place in the spiritual world, mentioned the new conditions into which the human mind had been brought by them, and spoke of the results that would follow. He averred that they marked a New Era, and would inaugurate a New Age in the world's affairs.

Every year since has borne testimony to the truth of his words. The history of Christendom, from that day to this, has been one steady and increasing confirmation of them. The general mind soon began to feel the stimulus of the new influences pouring down thus invisibly upon it, and an age of activity commenced. The wheels of history received a new impulse, and everything began to move with greater rapidity. Men began to grow restless under the old order and under the old restraints, while the masses

everywhere began to foment. As liberty had been proclaimed in the spiritual world, so liberty soon became a watchword in this. The elements which resulted in our Revolution began immediately to work; while the Declaration of American Independence in 1776, was only an echo in the natural world, of that general Declaration of Freedom which had already gone forth in the world of spirits, nearly twenty years before.

The movement was not long in crossing to Europe. The great French Revolution soon followed; an event in which we see the effects of the Judgment descending into this world with prodigious force, operating upon the corrupt and corrupting materials which they found here. Witness the general overturn in Europe which followed; — the wars, lasting a generation or more, of the Consulate and the Empire. Everywhere the old order opposed the new, but the new order was bound to make itself felt, and European society — throughout its entire length and breadth — was not left as it was found at the beginning. When peace came, Progress had been made. The ancient spell of conservatism had been broken up. And from that day to this, LIBERALIZATION is the single word which is written on every important political movement that has taken place in Christendom.

As we approach our own time, the prospect constantly brightens. The day dawns with continually increasing fulness. And the conflicts which we witness to-day going on in the world are only parts of that general war waged between that old order, — everywhere going out, and the new order, — everywhere coming in.

The more faithfully we study the history of the last hundred years in the light of these disclosures the more shall we realize the truth of these observations, and the more remarkable will the actual developments of the age be seen to be. The human mind under the strong stimulus of these influences, has more than doubled its energy in every department of action. Thought has been wide awake, and the human will seems as if gifted with a new motive power. There is not a field of employment that has not been revolutionized.

The world's philosophy has been rewritten. For all our modern systems date from Dr. Reid, who began to publish in 1763. He was followed by Immanuel Kant, the leader of the great modern movement in German thought, since whom have come the various metaphysical systems of Germany and France, of Great Britain and America.

The world's science has been reorganized. The larger part of that great body of accumulated fact and systematized knowledge known as "Modern Inductive Science," has been the creation of this period. For most of the branches of which it is composed, were not before pursued as distinct objects of study; and those which were, have been entirely metamorphosed, having one and all been reconsidered and reconstructed on new principles from cap to foundation stone. The field of knowledge has been widened and extended on every side. A spirit of the most intense inquiry has started up and come into exercise, which has pushed human researches out into fields not before dreamed of, leaving no stone unturned,—no region unexplored, and no monument of the past or present

unexamined, that could add facts to our knowledge, or throw any light upon nature, or upon man, his history or his relations. Readers of history have frequently remarked the strong contrast in this respect, between this age and those which have gone before. It is like a man who has started from comparative stupor, to full wakefulness. The words of the prophet with respect to these times, are literally fulfilled ; — that men should run to and fro, and that knowledge should be increased.

A great characteristic difference now observed is, that science and knowledge have become democratized, so to speak ; they now belong to the masses, diffusing their light and finding their votaries among the people ; and not, as before, shut up in schools or cloisters, and confined to the few.

The world's practical Art has been reorganized. The idea of applying science to art has come into vogue. The Steam-Engine has been invented : the Cotton Manufacture has been installed, — two things that have revolutionized the world's industry, and the world's commerce. It would be tedious and useless to cite here the achievements in this department ; — tedious, on account of the vast multitude of changes and inventions ; and useless, because all men know and acknowledge the unparalleled improvements of the age. The whole face of society has been changed by them, having been transformed into a new and better social or domestic order through their means.

It would be an interesting and instructive exercise, did time allow, and were this the place, to follow this subject more in detail, giving events, and names, and dates, to show how strikingly the whole movement

falls into place around the New Church ideas, and how fully the developments conform to and confirm New Church principles. But other parts of the subject claim more our attention.

The Christian Church, — where does that stand in this great movement? — and how has it been affected by this new tide of influences?

The Church is the Lord's first object of care in the world, and it is for the sake of the church, — for its improvement in purity of life, and its extension among men, — that these great changes have been inaugurated. Let us see, therefore, whether the churches of Christendom show any signs of this New Age. It might rationally be expected that they would. And on examination we shall find that it is so. Those new spiritual influences, descending from God out of heaven, were intended to affect most the religious state and character of men, and we shall discover that it is in the religious life of the world that they have produced the most remarkable and manifest effects.

There had been provision made by the Lord for the introduction of the new order. The Protestant Reformation had come, to make way and room for it; while the printing press, the mariner's compass, and the invention of gunpowder, had been given. These lay there as three great instrumentalities to be used by the spirit of the New Age, as soon as it should awake and lay hands on them. The first, for the promulgation of the truth or the shedding forth of light; the second, for carrying it abroad to men, and its diffusion to the world's end; and the last, for the execution of judgment, in the destruction and removal of the old order of things.

Later, towards the middle of the eighteenth century, there had been raised up a set of men, contemporaries of Swedenborg, who performed an important collateral work. We have already referred to some of them. It was the age of Whitefield, and the Wesleys, and Bishop Butler, and Jonathan Edwards. A great number of very important though less prominent names might be mentioned. At the same time the New Church Writings were going through the press, these men were preaching and publishing. Thus the attention of the Christian world was called, just at that period, in a remarkable manner, to the consideration of theological and religious themes. It was the recognized date of a new era in church history and in systematic theology; and has been by many writers significantly called "The Great Awakening;" by others, "The great Protestant Revival."

Thus was the popular mind Providentially prepared for the reception of new influences and new ideas in religion. Since then the movement has gone constantly and rapidly forward. Blindness, prejudice, narrowness, bigotry, and the persecuting spirit have constantly receded. The liberalization of thought has everywhere made itself felt, until at length it has become predominant. No one who has not made it his special study, can conceive the change that has been wrought. It is now as if we were living in a new religious world from that which then existed. A "new earth" has, indeed, in many respects, already been created.

As we have before constantly remarked, the power—the spiritual power—of this New Age flows in through the Bible; the spiritual meaning of the Divine

Word has been expounded, and is now in use in the world of spirits. And thus the Word is now endowed with more power in the natural world than it possessed before. A feeling, or tacit perception of this fact, is a marked feature of these new times. New attention has been called to the Bible. The churches, not long after the period we have mentioned, began to feel that they owed new duties in this respect; good men kept the subject agitated, until Bible societies were formed, and a widespread and systematic effort grew up for its diffusion; the design being formed at length of giving it to the entire people, high and low, rich and poor. This was an entirely new idea, — this of the universal diffusion of the Bible among all classes, as a systematic effort, by means of the great organizations; it had no existence in former times. The masses formerly did not have the Bible. And we read that, on one occasion, when, in the year 1808, the British and Foreign Bible Society sent a supply of thirty thousand copies to one of the Welch cities, forwarding them thither in carts drawn by oxen, the inhabitants, hearing that the Bibles were coming, left their occupations, and went out in crowds to meet them; and, taking off the oxen, drew the carts into the city themselves, amidst great rejoicings.

Some negroes on the West coast of Africa, having been taught to read by some Englishmen on the coast, for mercantile purposes, accidentally fell in with two or three leaves of a worn-out Bible, and became so interested that they took means to send to England for a complete copy; the order resulted in the establishment of a mission, which ever since has carried the Word to the inhabitants of that region.

A missionary started from England and landed in Southern Africa, without definite purpose, only that he must go somewhere and preach the gospel. With a few guides, he took his way due northward into the wilds. Getting beyond the bounds of civilization, they pitched their tent late one afternoon, and had not long been making their preparations for the night, when a party of negroes or Bushmen came and encamped near them. For fear of unpleasant consequences, the missionary and his guides removed their camp some distance. In the morning they learned that their neighbors were a negro chief and a hundred or more of followers, going down to the coast to learn about the Bible. The chief told them that in his country he had heard about the "Great Word," and that he was going down to get some one who could teach it to his people. Of course, the missionary went home with the chief, carrying the Word with him.

And when missionaries have arrived for the first time on some of the islands of the sea, they have found a marvellous state of preparation in the untutored mind, that had preceded them in the work.

These instances might be multiplied to an almost indefinite extent; going to show that since the middle of the last century, there has been an influx, from an invisible source, into the common mind, determining it towards spiritual things, and creating in it an appetency for the Bible and its truths.

The growth of the modern missionary spirit belongs to this period. This idea, now so strongly possessed by the Christian Denominations, of evangelizing foreign nations, — of sending the gospel to the heathen,

is a thought germinated by this New Age; it did not exist before. Foreign missions, with Protestants, had gone into abeyance. The same is true of almost every religious, moral, and philanthropic enterprise that can be named. They have all sprung into existence since that time. Home missions, Sunday Schools, Tract societies, Temperance societies, revivals of religion, the abolition of the African slave-trade. Public charities, indeed, existed before, but since then in Protestant countries, they have assumed new life and new proportions, have multiplied beyond measure, and devoted themselves to a much wider range of objects. The career of Howard the philanthropist, began about 1760, and, as all are well aware, his life and efforts mark a new era in care for the distressed and afflicted, in the treatment of prisoners and the insane, and in the history of all benevolent and philanthropic operations. Society everywhere, morally, wears a new aspect. This modern idea which all men now have so distinctly developed in their minds, about the "*progress of the race*," is new; men did not use to believe in progress.

Thus, on looking round us, and surveying the developments of the last hundred years, the presence of this New Age stands everywhere confessed. All men feel it. All men see it. All men speak of it. It has become a theme of statesmen and orators, of poets and essayists, of historians and philosophers, of preachers, and of moralists. Some of the most brilliant articles of our leading Reviews for the last twenty years, have been devoted to it, — in sketching its character, and pointing out its results. With all

these there is a general agreement as to the date of its commencement. We have seen it called, in print, "a new dispensation," by writers who evidently knew nothing whatever of our New Church views.

But no single mind could do justice to the theme ; no single pen could narrate and characterize all the results ; they branch forth in too many directions, and embrace too large a body of developments. No former age has been so crowded with magnificent events. No other five centuries the world has ever seen, have witnessed so many changes, or involved so much real history, as have been compressed within this single one.

Some historical essayists had remarked, in view of these mighty changes in society, that "ours is now no longer the same world to live in that it was formerly ;" to which a philosophical Christian observer of our own time and country, has significantly added, — "No, nor the same world to *think* in that it was before." Here he struck the key of a true note. It is no longer the same world to think in that our fathers had. The developments of science, the discovery of the laws of nature, and the accumulation of knowledge, have been such as to surround us with new conditions in this respect. Many things formerly believed and preached, could not be believed to-day, if preached. While many other things, almost impossible to be believed then, because their rational ground was unknown, can not only be believed now, but are seen to be rational and true. Things before deemed to be impossible, have become, not only possible, but common.

This is of the Divine Providence. This modification

of thought is a purpose the Lord had in view. There was a new unfolding of Divine Truth to be delivered, a new body of Doctrine to be given and taught. And this modification of the thought, and of the intellectual conditions of the race, is to prepare the human mind for the reception of those Doctrines, and for a higher stage of thinking on religious subjects.

We have already mentioned the publication of the New Church Writings about the middle of the last century. This publication proceeded from the year 1749 to 1771. In those Writings are contained three distinct, important classes of Truths.

1. The Key and Explanation of the spiritual meaning of Scripture, and its application to the regeneration of man ; —

2. The system of Heavenly Doctrines, revealed from the Word, — and

3. The Disclosure of the states of the Departed, or of life in the spiritual state of existence.

The publication of this voluminous, profound, and complete Body of Revealed Doctrine, was the birth of the “Man Child” into the natural world, or the world of men. It was the bringing forth and promulgation here of the same body of truths which we read of in the twelfth chapter, as having been brought forth and promulgated by the church in the spiritual world. It is this system of Doctrines, as well as the Church to be instituted and constituted by them, which is described in the twenty-first chapter, under the figure of the New Jerusalem ; *Jerusalem* being not only the common prophetic name for the church, as is generally acknowledged, but where it is spoken of as a city ; for the church *in one especial characteristic*, and that

is, with respect to the Doctrine which she embodies and teaches.

These Doctrines have been taught in the world about one hundred years. But how different now the scene from that presented when they were introduced! Religious thought has since been revolutionized.

They were sent out through the press and distributed over the world, especially to the universities and seats of learning. Since then, ideas from them, percolating through society, have become the property of the masses. The world's best opinion has been constantly nearing the New Church system. Movements have been based upon single ideas borrowed from it. The modifications of doctrine in many churches are fragments taken from this system. Its full, clear, and distinct affirmation of universal infant salvation, though not yet introduced into many of the standards, is nevertheless, by common consent, now received as the general doctrine of the churches. Its doctrine of the Resurrection, entirely disclaimed at first, is now the belief (may we not say?) of half the *people*, despite the teaching of the standards.

Nearly all the Denominations are divided into two parties, — high church and low church, — broad church and narrow church, — old school and new school; that is, a party of conservatism, holding on to the old, and a party of progress, looking forward to the new. Of course, when men attempt to work out their own progress, they will go in many devious ways, but on examination it will generally be found that the modifications brought in by these processes tend in the direction of the New Church, and are qualified by some fragments of thought borrowed,

perhaps unsuspectingly, from her system. In the same way new denominations have sprung up, and old sects have divided.

The quickened activity of religious thought has culminated in the successive formation of new Denominations, with varying and divergent views. The whole history of Methodism, as well as the development of Universalism and Unitarianism, is comprised within this period; not to mention numerous others, many of them of recent date, still constantly running into subdivisions, ending, in not a few cases, in the formation of strange and extravagant sects.

Thus the thought of the age is advancing to meet the New Jerusalem. Pulpits do not preach as they did fifty years ago; nor as they did twenty-five years ago; no, nor as they did even *ten* years ago. The mind of the Christian Public is being providentially led, in a great measure unconsciously to itself, by slow degrees, and yet steadily and constantly, over, from the ground of the Old Age to the ground of the New.

We do not believe this movement of opinion will be arrested; we believe it will go on, and increase, and become accelerated, until the new Views are generally adopted; until the now divided Christian Church will come to stand upon a common platform of Doctrine, and be united in a common bond of life. For we read that "They shall see eye to eye when Jehovah shall bring again Zion."

In the twenty-first chapter, as we have said, under the emblem of a city, there is described in prophetic language, this great and perfect Body of Heavenly Doctrine. As the previous Ages of the Church are

symbolized in Daniel's Image by different metals, more and less precious, so this New Jerusalem Age is frequently described as the age of gems or precious stones; as the Age in which the church will have her "foundations" of "sapphires," her "windows of agates," her "gates of carbuncles, and all" her "borders of precious stones." This is to denote the superior order of the truths now revealed, and the greater degree of light now diffused; for it is added in the prophet, "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children;" — truths of higher value, of more perfect beauty, of greater clearness, and in larger variety than ever known before. So here, the holy city is described with twelve foundations, composed of as many distinct gems, — as "garnished," indeed, "with all manner of precious stones." Her "light" is spoken of as being "like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." This is to symbolize the spiritual sense of the Divine Word, which is the peculiar foundation of the New Jerusalem. All through the Scripture, the truth of the church is compared to a rock, and to stones, — a "tried stone," "a foundation stone," &c. but always to stones of common durability and hardness, to the opaque rock, as we commonly see it. Now this is a figure of Divine Truth, for the most part, as we see it in the *letter* of the Word. But the *gems* are employed to symbolize the same letter illustrated and enlightened by the spiritual meaning, — the same dark literal expression with the light of heaven poured upon it and through it, and understood according to the angelic idea. These truths, filling the Scripture from beginning to

end, constitute the foundations of the New Church, for they are the very truths of which her doctrines are composed.

Her *wall*, "great and high," is the array of defensive truths, drawn from the Scripture, by which she is surrounded on all sides, and protected; by means of which she can give a good, correct, and rational reply to every objection that can be urged against her from any quarter. And can protect and deliver men from their own errors and false notions, so far as they are willing to be delivered from them.

Her *gates*, looking every way, and composed of magnificent pearls, are her introductory truths; the reasonable considerations, with which the Lord providentially endows her, which lead men to take notice of her system of Doctrines, to examine them, to conclude in favor of them, and at length to follow them. These truths, pure, clear, numerous, valuable, and attractive to every truly Christianized and rational mind, are the "gates" through which men enter her precincts, and begin to abide in her palaces.

Her *streets* are the ways of life which her truths point out; the precepts of purity and holiness, the precepts of righteousness and justice, the precepts of repentance and departure from evil, the precepts of Supreme love towards God, and corresponding love towards man. Ways of life which, if followed, restore the "golden age," leading men into even more than the primeval purity and charity; for the practice of heavenly goodness now, is accomplished under a greater fulness of light, being penetrated by the rational understanding of a larger supply of revealed truth. Hence we read that "the street of the city was of pure gold, as it were transparent glass."

That this city "had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it," does not mean that men will no longer need those material, visible luminaries, for it is prophetic language that is here used, and men will always require these; but it means that the men who shall come to and be willing to walk by the light of the New Jerusalem, will no longer require the common worldly means of *mental* illumination. They will no longer need the light that comes from selfish love, nor the light that comes from worldly love. They will not have to run after the maxims, the sayings, the doctrines, or the speculations of men for guidance in spiritual things, or to be taught how to think on divine, heavenly, and spiritual subjects. They will be delivered, too, from following their own vague, wayward, fallacious, and insufficient notions about such things. For the Lord, through His Word, will be their light, teaching them its spiritual and heavenly meaning, and shedding down a heavenly illustration into their minds.

In the twenty-second chapter we read, principally, a description of the effects that will gradually follow the adoption and practice of the truths of the spiritual sense of the Word. And we see there a most perfect, beautiful, and happy state of life unfolded. A perfect paradise is depicted, — holy, pure, and peaceful. This is the state of things, the condition of society, which Christianity, as unfolded in the Doctrines of the New Jerusalem, is calculated to produce; and a state of society which *will be* produced just in the degree that these doctrines are received into the life, and honestly and thoroughly carried out in practice.

They are meant for the world, and they are sent by the Lord in this latter day to reform, and regenerate, and reorganize the world; and they will be endowed with power from on high to effect it. They *will* reach men, because they are the Truth; they will reach their understandings, insuring belief; and then they will reach their hearts, insuring love; and their wills, insuring obedient practice.

The Bible begins with man in Eden, surrounded by the emblems and conditions of an innocent, unspotted state of life. This was the infancy of the race. It follows him in his decline and falling away, like a prodigal son leaving his Father's house, through all his weary wanderings in sin, — the long and devious wilderness journey of the world's historic ages, until at length, it shows him to us, in prophetic visions recovered, the lost found, brought back to order and duty, restored to more than his Eden state, with the Tree of Life standing in the midst of the Garden, imbued with the repentant innocence of wisdom, more trustworthy and more enduring than the innocence of childhood.

What a picture is here opened to us of the world's future! No catastrophe. No "end of the world;" no departure of this visible framework; no destruction of mankind. But the earth given to man as his perpetual inheritance, while in the mortal body; to endure forever, the seminary in which he is to be instructed for heaven, and where the human race can devote the vigor of its manhood to the service of the Creator; each generation, as it rises into being and passes on towards the immortal world, being prepared for and becoming the inheritor of eternal life!

APPENDIX.

NOTES TO THE LECTURES.

NOTE A, LECTURE I.

THE heavenly or spiritual meaning within the natural meaning, *everywhere*, in the *historical* as well as other parts, &c. This assertion is meant to apply to only the really prophetic Books, and not to our entire English Bible. We use the term *prophetic*, however, in its broadest sense, including the writings of all the prophets or holy seers who received the "Word of the Lord" in open vision. On examination, these will be found to be—the Books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Psalms, the other prophets, in the Old Testament, and the Gospels, with the Book of Revelation, in the New Testament.

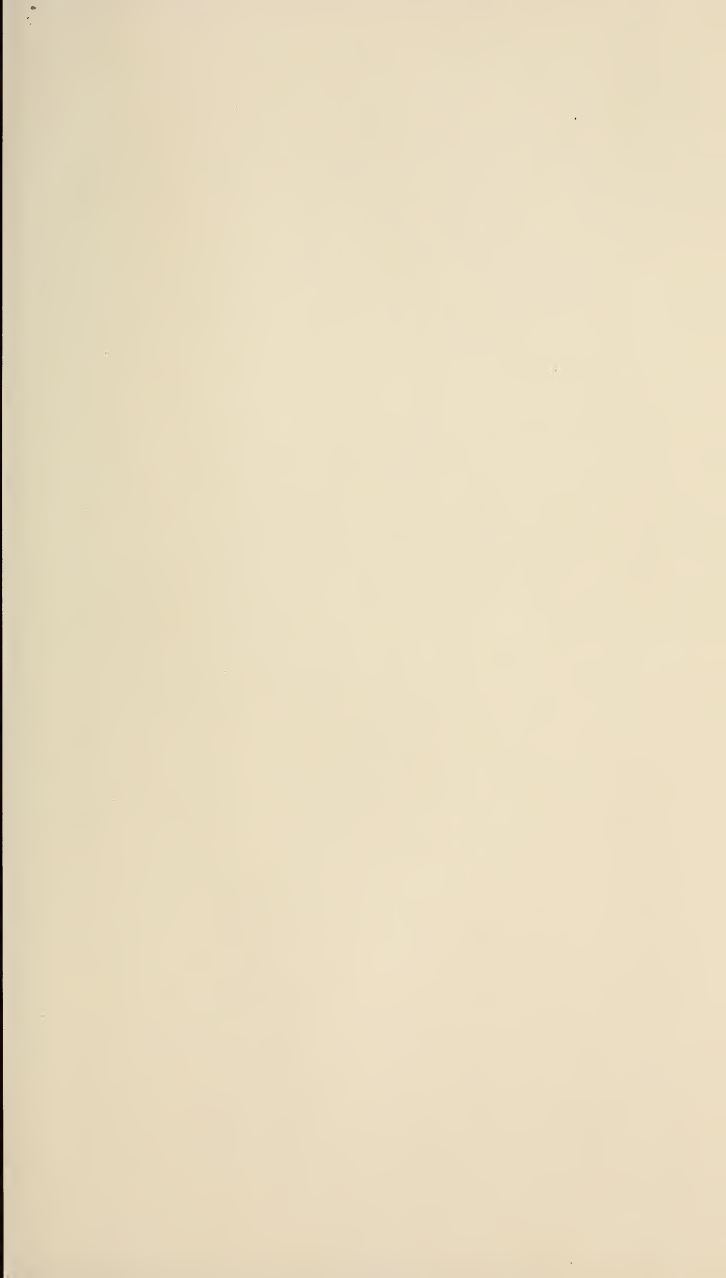
It is not meant to assert, therefore, that the other Books of the Canon—as the Book of Esther, or Proverbs—have any deeper meaning in them than the one expressed in the letter. So, with the Apostolical Epistles,—while they are deeply imbued with the heavenly or spiritual element, their authors writing under influences from on high, it is believed that their whole meaning is conveyed by the simple grammatical sense. These latter books may truly be called "inspired," according to the common or general theological sense of that term, but their inspiration is different in mode and kind, from the former; they are not immediate Divine utterances.

NOTE B, LECTURE II.

THE Spiritual Meaning of Scripture will be found drawn out at length in the three following works by Emanuel Swedenborg: *The Arcana Celestia*, thirteen volumes; *The Apocalypse Revealed*, two volumes; *The Apocalypse Explained*, five volumes. In these works Scripture is compared with Scripture, and the meaning evolved in clear light by the declarations of the Word itself. The strength of demonstration attending these explanations can be realized only by a careful and candid, and at the same time prayerful perusal of those writings themselves. And to this perusal we would earnestly invite the intelligent and truth-loving religious mind of this age.

NOTE C, LECTURE IX.

THE influences from the world of spirits stupefying the minds of men. For a vivid historical picture of some of these effects, drawn by an author writing from a different stand-point from that of the Christian Church, see Mr. Buckle's two chapters on the state of things in Spain and Scotland, respectively, — the one a Catholic, the other a Protestant country, during the last part of the seventeenth, and the first part of the eighteenth century.







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